TESTS: Yamaha FJ1100, Honda CR500R, Yamaha YZ490

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CYCLE GUIDE

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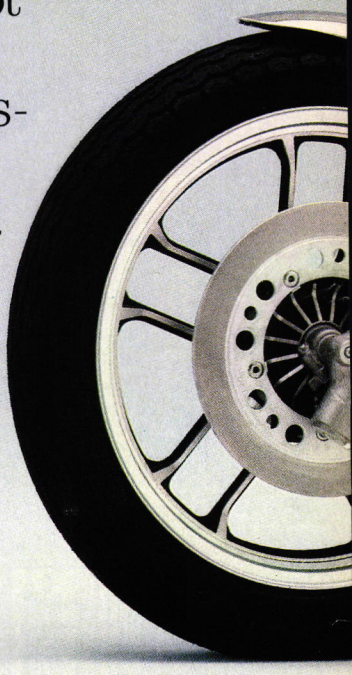

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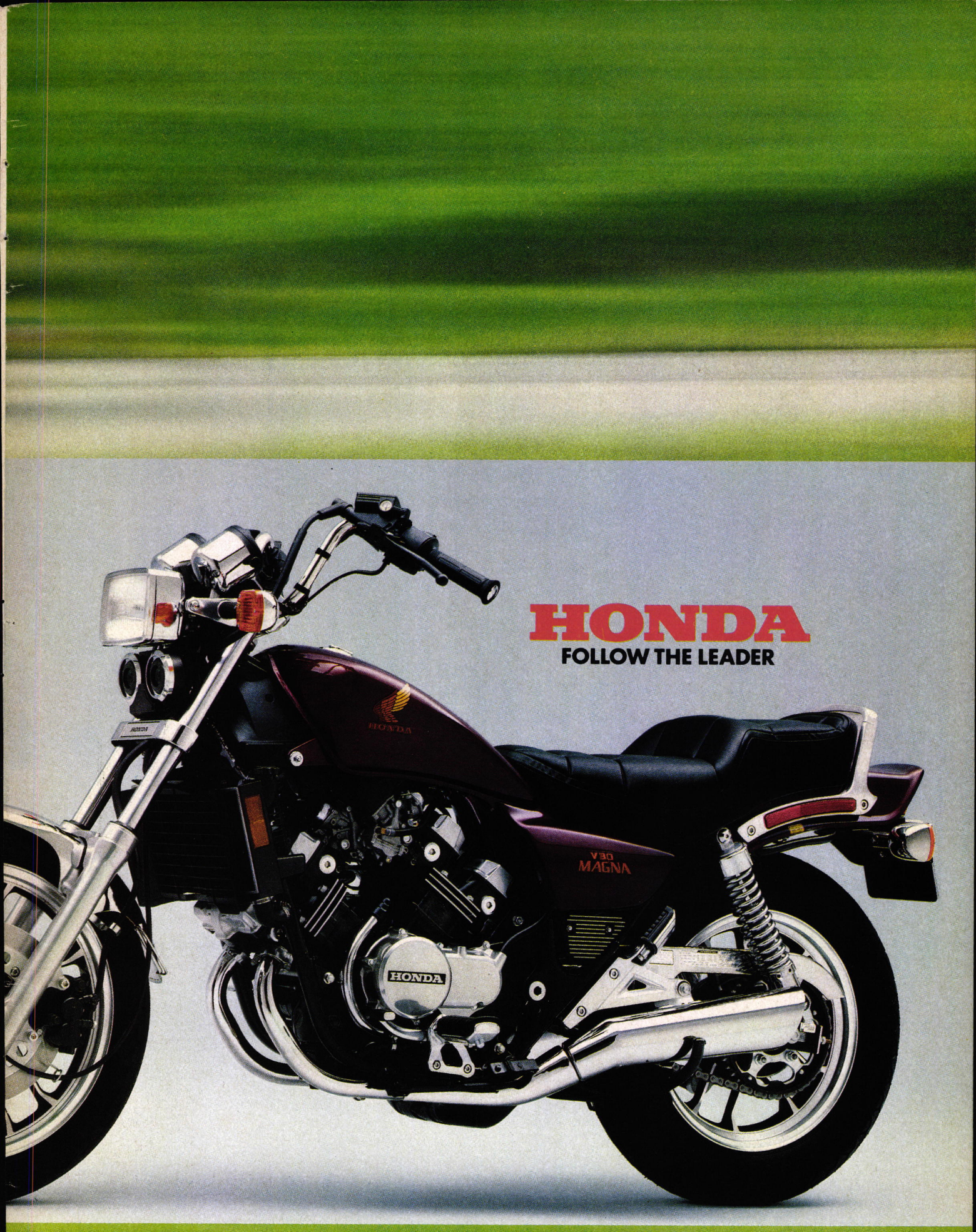

crankshaft. California version differs slightly due to emissions equipment. © 1984 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 699-CG4, Box 9000, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

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ON THE COVER:
Unless you blinked, you just saw Charles Everitt clearing up the blurry issue of just who makes the world's quickest and fastest motorcycle. Photographic impression by Vic Huber.

QUOTE:
"That's CYCLE GUIDE editor Ron Lawson pulling his bike out of the hay bales. Ron's improved a lot since yesterday."

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CYCLE GUIDE

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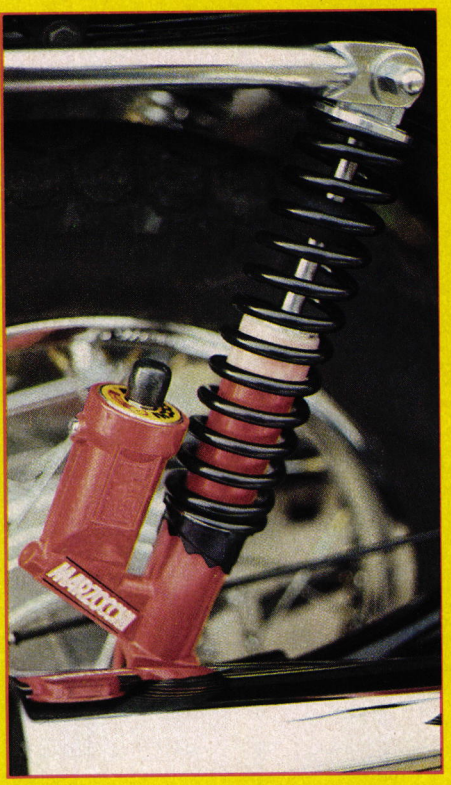

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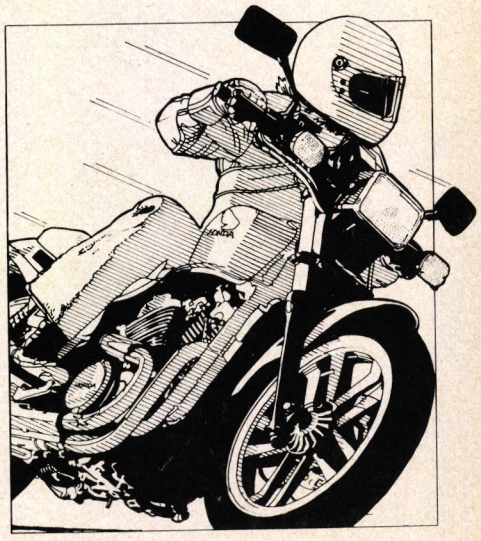

CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's Catalog of Recent Test Hardware—No Brag, Just Fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WMX250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC200X-'83	August '83	ATV	Four-stroke	7.2/6.2	285	N/A	5
Honda ATC250R	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.5	228	27.2/4.25	5
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250 CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 430 WR-'83	June '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.4/10.6	246	30.0/5.98	6
Husqvarna 500 CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 500 XC-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	11.7/12.8	245	30.0/5.98	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'83	July '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	9.8/11.0	213	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Sand Spider-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	12.0/12.7	243	27.0/4.72	5
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki RM125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.4	190	29.5/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.3	233	28.0/4.65	6
Yamaha TT600K-'83	August '83	Trail	Four-stroke	11.7/10.8	280	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.6	214	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	March '84	2C/G	979.9	13.172/100.11	125	495	27–50	148
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.928/93.65	112	639	34–61	140
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda CX650 Custom-'83	May '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.560/102.97	119	454	38–48	124
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	March '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.093/111.66	137†	538	25–44	124
Honda GL1200A Aspencade-'84	March '84	4C/G	1181.9	13.156/98.14	118	744	33–46	141
Honda Nighthawk 550-'83	July '83	4A/G	572.3	12.461/102.97	114	429	37–49	125
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '82	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda VF500F Interceptor	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.417/107.65	127	419	33–48	123
Honda VF750F Interceptor	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000F Interceptor	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.121/123.45	150	536	23–45	125
Honda V45 Sabre- '83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.179/111.11	128	514	33–46	130
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550	May '84	4A/F	553.8	12.559/105.38	125	436	32–56	136
Kawasaki GPz750	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37-47	120
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24-48	120
Kawasaki KZ550 Spectre-'83	May '83	4A/G	553.8	13.348/96.77	116†	441	44–56	137
Kawasaki KZ750-L3-'83	January '83	4A/F	739.0	12.095/108.95	134†	487	47–53	132
Kawasaki Ninja	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS450E-'83	January '83	2A/F	448.2	14.236/93.16	106†	384	39–49	131
Suzuki GS450G Automatic-'83	February '83	2A/G	448.2	16.412/82.34	94†	410	36–59	143
Suzuki GS550E-'83	June '83	4A/F	572.3	12.593/104.04	120	443	39–47	135
Suzuki GS650M Katana-'83	November '83	4A/G	673.9	13.238/101.01	122†	491	49–60	137
Suzuki GS750E-'83	August '83	4A/F	747.4	11.893/112.92	131†	485	35–50	135
Suzuki XN85 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	673.9	12.381/107.14	132†	521	34–46	120
Yamaha RZ350-'83	December '83	2A/F††	347.4	13.343/98.46	112	346	N/A	N/A
Yamaha XJ650 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/G	653.4	13.059/103.32	126†	543	35–53	126
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	June '84	4A/F	1097.6	10.992/124.48	146	535	27–46	121
Yamaha XZ550R Vision-'83	November '83	70 deg. 2D/G	552.9	13.422/95.23	112	483	39–47	124
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive
† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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Setting It Right

Building In The Artland

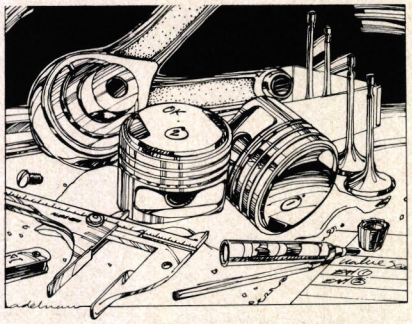
Parting shots at Colonial Motors Inc.

• Architecture is the most public of the arts, providing a lasting reference to the tastes and the needs of a time, a place, a people. Second to architecture comes—what? Clothing? That is too hedged by social taboos to have the freedom requisite in art; at best it ranks little higher than mere decoration. No, I believe that the second most public art form is the motor vehicle; very little investigation is necessary to establish that it has not yet been reduced to a science.

Like architecture, the motor vehicle is inescapable. The similarity goes further: When we are in our most familiar surroundings, we hardly notice it. Its sheer omnipresence practically forces us to take it for granted, like the air we breathe. Again the similarity to architecture is a telling one, for very few of us enjoy full freedom to choose our surroundings, to choose where we live, where we work, or what traffic we will encounter between the two. Accordingly, we develop a selective blindness: We do not see what we wish not to see, especially if we wish not to think about it. In the case of traffic, we may also develop a selective deafness. We have to protect ourselves against that erosion which is the secret servant of exposure, just as we shut ourselves off from surrounding crowds in order to avoid the stress of relating to too many people.

When we travel away from home to unfamiliar places, then our eyes are opened. It may be that we want to drink in all we can see, as though to slake our thirst for knowledge; it may equally be yet another form of self-protection, like the acute sensitivity of one who picks a way through an unknown jungle teeming with presumed predators.

So in alien places we keep our ears open. We note the screech of brakes tearing rubber, the squeak of air-conditioners and steering pumps having a hard life, the blast of defiantly open pipes on a Harley sounding like a pair of Bofors guns running amok. Twenty-three years ago, riding an Ariel Arrow in the London rain, I heard behind me the unmistakable muted rip of a car's tires locked and sliding on the slick tarmac. With more cars in front of me, I turned onto a side street more sharply than ever in my life. Quite unexpectedly I came to that corner again, having not seen it for 20 years, and I recognized it immediately, recalling that confirmatory look over my shoulder to see a green Austin A30 skidding past in headlong agony.



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A year ago I came to live in America, and to an Englishman (especially one sensitive to such changes in the language as may be detected in a ride of 30 miles) there is no more foreign country than this. Nor, save perhaps in India or China, can there be such a variety of vistas; but the scenic variety, be it prehistoric or post-dustbowl, is fogged by an unexpected monotony of buildings and traffic. Probably no country has a richer variety of architecture than England, nor more multifarious motorcycling than France; but I had innocently supposed that America would come closer to matching both than it proves to do. I cannot yet tell which is the most fundamental of all the reasons which occur to me as explaining these deficiencies, and have no desire to appear patronizing by listing them all. But if, as seems to be the case, American riders can be grouped into only four categories, then from studying them, one common characteristic shines out as distinctly American: Scarcely any American rides because of necessity; he does it because he wants to do it—which I have long maintained is not only the best way, but also the safest and happiest way.

It should follow from this that American riders, being free from the constraints of necessity, are also free to indulge their desires. That is to say, since no American has somehow to buy the motorcycle he needs (since it is apparent that, broadly speaking, no American actually needs a motorcycle), he is free instead to buy the machine he wants. This liberty, while obviously lower in rank than some others of which the American citizen (if not the American resident) is constitutionally assured, is nevertheless a precious one.

Is there yet any evidence that this modest freedom has not yet been diminished by the new restrictive leglislation which, by inflicting a penal surtax on large, imported machines, makes him feel less free to exercise his choice? Would it not have been more logical, if the object was to protect the American motorcycle industry rather than one particular American manufacturer (and it is, or should be, merely coincidental that the two expressions are currently synonymous in effect), if the tariff had been applied to all imports? If the American rider truly wants an American motorcycle, why are there not American motorcycle manufacturers supplying his wants?

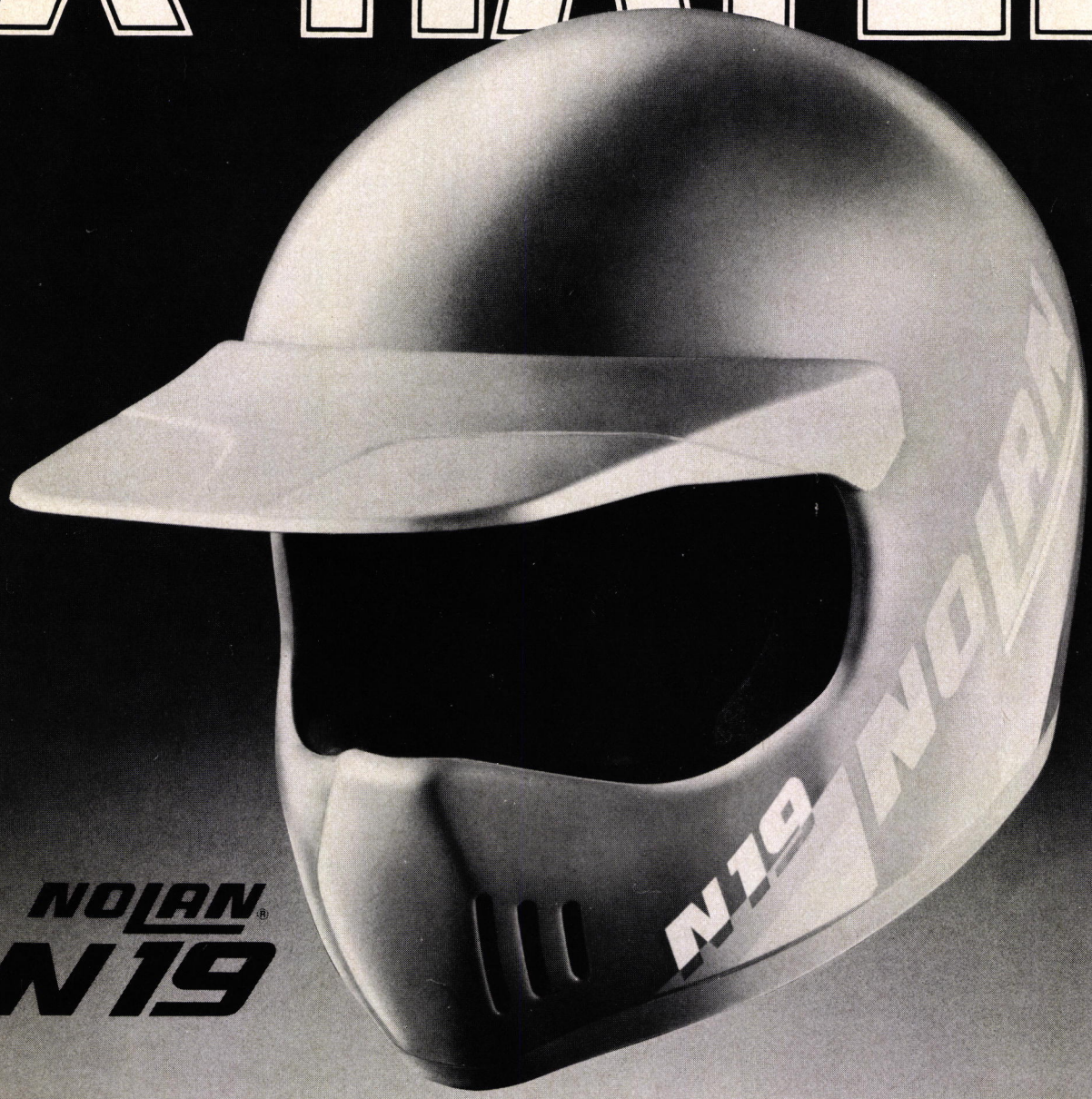
There are, I suggested earlier, perhaps not more than four categories of American motorcyclists. That is at least four times as many as are served by American makers, for it cannot be denied that Harley enthusiasts are in a class by themselves. If those other classes, mutually distinct but internally uniform, could each be satisfied by its own characteristic machine, why are there not three other American machines corresponding to what Americans want?

A sociologist friend tells me that the domestic life of most Americans is focused in a room-space that varies astonishingly little in size, no matter how extensive the whole apartment or house might be. The job of the architect is to dress up that basic unit, to variegate the decoration of life without altering its pattern. Since two-thirds of the riding population probably would be content with variegated Nighthawks, the architects of American motorcycling could doubtless flourish along similar lines.

I should be glad to design a motorcycle for America, and even to be involved in its manufacture and marketing; but I see that, unbusinesslike as ever, I have already talked myself out of what could be a rewarding job. If America has its art in the right place, the job should be done by an American. —*L.J.K. Setright*

Setright was listed as a foreign correspondent during his stay in the U.S., for reasons that should be clear to his readers. He continues to correspond, now from his native Middlesex, and reportedly still would relish designing the Great American Motorcycle—ed.

X-RATED



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The N19 is approved for all AMA Racing and offers you lightweight construction, with a plush interior, comfortable, padded neck-roll and Nolan's exclusive ventilated chin piece.

The long, peak visor has no snaps or rivets, it just clips in to enhance the helmet's sleek, smooth design.

Whether you're a professional racer or just like to get dirty on the weekends, you can't buy a better helmet for the money.

The Nolan N19 Only $74.95... Why Pay more?

Available in Black, White, Red, Blue, Yellow; S, M, L, or XL for $74.95 plus tax by sending check or money order to: DynaTour Corporation, 1944 N. Narragansett Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60639, Phone (312) 637-5049

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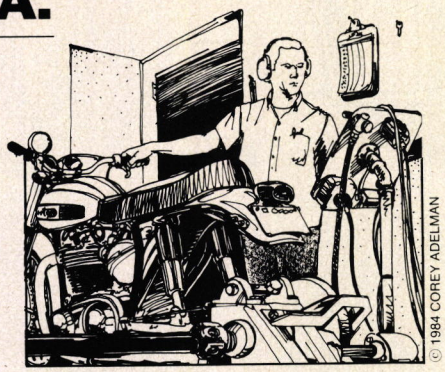
Thompson at Large

Dealerland, U.S.A.

Where all roads begin.



• The guy heaved himself onto the Kawasaki Voyager, twisted the throttle, yanked the clutch lever and grimaced. He waggled the wheel, making the indoor-outdoor carpeting wrinkle and pucker.

"My God," he said, "This thing is huge! Why not just get a car and be done with it?"

Tyson Rose did not attempt to describe the verities of turn-key touring. Neither did he snarl and demand the guy get his butt off the $8300 merchandise. Instead, he smiled and said, "Well, just think about it: What kind of car can you get for that much? Would it be that fast, that sophisticated? "

The guy grunted and wandered over to another motorcycle. Still wearing his patient smile, Tyson Rose followed him.

Why would anyone want to be a dealer? Especially people like Tyson Rose and his wife Stav? They got into it the same way a lot of others did: They were enthusiasts. Tyson learned to ride in graduate school, and Stav a little later. But motorcycling remained a hobby for them until 1974, when they decided to switch careers. As doctors of psychology, they'd been engrossed in academic life, teaching and researching experimental psychology. But coincident with funding cuts for research came a need to escape the predictable. Hence, their decision to combine business with pleasure in motorcycling.

The result, a decade later, is Two Wheels of Frederick, one of four big dealerships in the small Maryland town for which the shop is named. It's an example of the best kind of modern motorcycle shop: a converted warehouse/machine shop, full of bright displays, motorcycles and accessories, from its video cassette viewing room to the secret classic-motorcycle den near the service bays. The staff is friendly, the customers loyal, and the breadth of merchandise (from BMW, Kawasaki, Suzuki) big enough to insure that, when the cold slows GPz sales, Tyson can move Suzuki four-wheelers or snowmobiles. In its layout and operation, it is as different from the motorcycle shops of the bad old days as can be imagined, but it retains an allure for its customers, who always find a reason to stop by, chat with the Roses, and maybe buy a can of chain lube.

Business as usual in Dealerland, U.S.A. A pair of psychologists running a motorcycle store in the wilds of Maryland. Again: Why? Certainly not for the money. I found that out when I took the Roses to lunch at an Irish saloon called Donnelly's. In between the chowder and the cake, they provided some glimpses of what life is like for someone who owns and operates a motorcycle shop. Piles of money didn't figure in anywhere.

What did figure in was work. Much more, I discovered, than that required of a car dealer. Take information, for example. A specialty car dealer has a network of information sources to supplement his sales chores. With the sophistication of database management, a dealer can identify likely customers from any number of lists tailored to his area. Further, the manufacturers long ago realized that unloading a vehicle didn't end the dealer's need for their help, so the successful car-makers provide varying levels of dealer support, from co-op ad schemes to roving sales-support teams. Nothing like the local-area support systems common to successful auto dealerships is available to Tyson Rose.

Then there's the matter of staffing. For Rose it's a headache that grows worse with the increasing sophistication of the hardware he sells and services. The problem combines the low esteem that parts and service people garner within a community and the seasonality of the business itself. Because there is no comprehensive national network for skilled mechanics, when a dealer wants a new service person, he must advertise locally, then separate the qualified from the unqualified. And once he does find a good person, the problem of winter work wreaks havoc with the dealer's economics; how to keep the master mechanic busy (and profitable)?

Finally, there is the matter of community relations. Although society is slowly coming to accept motorcycles more as machines rather than instruments of the devil, a motorcycle dealer still has a considerably more difficult PR task than a car dealer, if for no other reason than the incessant recycling of devil-biker movies. Dealing with this while trying to make a living from the changing appetites of a whimsical group like motorcyclists is enough to make anyone ask, "What am I doing here?"

And the Roses, like most dealers, have asked themselves that, many times. But then the intangibles take over, such as the pride of running a successful small business. Or the knowledge that you're doing things right. And maybe even being a vital part of a community. As they talked, it was clear their initial enthusiasm for motorcycling had driven them through the lean, tough years, and that gradually, being professional had kept them going in the last few, even tougher, years.

And things are tough, not only for them but for most dealers. The Roses have three model-years represented on their showroom, a legacy of bad factory planning (and maybe of manufacturers not listening to dealer comments on buyer preferences). And America's changing demographics mean that fewer teenagers exist to be fascinated with two wheels. There's also the frenzied rush of the manufacturers toward ever-more-complicated machinery, which requires new tools, service training and parts stocking. Faced with that, why would anyone want to be a dealer?

To the manufacturer, a dealer is a retailer, the final link in the chain of profit. To the financial community, a dealer is a high-risk investment, his product tainted by unfathomable marketing forces. But to his customers, a dealer is a necessity. His shop is a bazaar, a meeting place, gossip center and training ground, Dream Central for moto-adventures. When the dealer becomes a major part of our motorcycling lives, we find ourselves making buying decisions not on straightforward mechanical merit, but on his franchise affiliation. After all, motorcycles are machines, but dealers are people, like us.

Why be a dealer? I still don't know. But I hope those like the Roses do. We need all we can get. —*Steve Thompson*

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W HAS WON THE ON'T EVEN SURVIVE.

It spans more than 7,000 miles.

Down the four-lane highways of southern France. Across the Mediterranean by ferry. And into the narrow ravines of the Algerian mountains.

Over the "desert of deserts," the lifeless Tenere. And through jungles teeming with more kinds of life than a lone rider cares to see.

Then it's into "fesh-fesh" territory, the vast dust basins that choke the airflow from machines and men alike. Through the dense rain forests of Touba. And finally, for a fortunate few, out into the clear sea breezes of the West African coastline for the final run to the finish.

This is Paris-Dakar, motorcycling's greatest melodrama. The all-out charge from the City of Light to the Dark Continent that each year claims more motorcycles than any course yet devised.

The race always begins on January 1. And, twenty days later, nearly always ends the same way: with the familiar horizontally-opposed-twin silhouette of a BMW roaring over the horizon long before any other machine.

This year, the race results once again read more like a survivor list. Gaston Rahier rode his BMW to first. Two-time winner, Hubert Auriol, rode his BMW to second. Another BMW ridden by Raymond Loizeaux finished fifth. And 74 out of the original 125 starters didn't finish at all.

Strikingly short of moving parts, BMW's 1000cc opposed-twin engines showed their innate ability to keep on moving. To outrun smaller bore bikes on the flatlands. And, because of their lower center of gravity, to outmaneuver other bikes through ravines and cutbacks alike.

Inspiring the competition to once again go back to the drawing boards. So that they can return with newer, bigger, faster engines next year.

Which, of course, is what they did last year. And the year before that. And the year before that....

THE LEGENDARY MOTORCYCLES OF GERMANY.

BMW

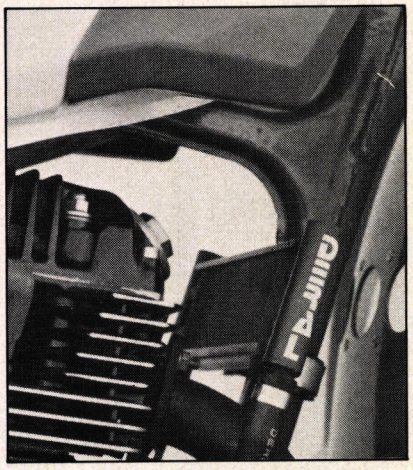
Motomart

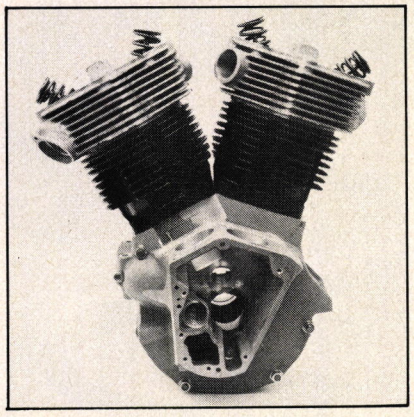
The motorcycle shop that makes house calls.

V-Rated Venom: From Avon Tires of England comes a new V-rated sport/racing tire called the AM18 Super Venom. The new skin's rubber compound is said to enhance traction on wet roads, and the wide-profile tread contour is designed to give the Venom a broad contact patch, even at steep lean angles. The Super Venom is available in popular rear wheel sizes, and retails for $79.95 from Hap Jones, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 32368, San Jose, California 95152.

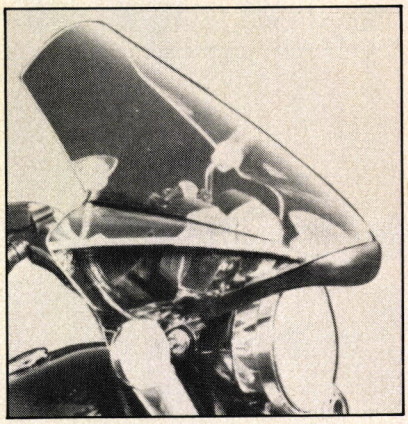
New Araival: The latest haberdashery from Arai is the Supervent, a full-coverage fiberglass helmet with a bi-level ventilation system. A control lever modulates the ventilation through six horizontal slots in the Supervent's chinbar, with half the incoming air directed through the helmet's jawpiece, and the other half diverted up into the helmet's crown, then ducted out through the helmet's neck cushion. The Snell-80-approved Supervent retails for $188.95 in the "Vintage" graphics shown, from Arai Helmets, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 421, Tenafly, New Jersey 07670.

Cold-Blooded Dirt Trikes: To cool off some of the latest industry hot sellers, Derale has developed a line of oil coolers to fit Kawasaki's KLT200 as well as a variety of Honda ATCs. The ATV cooler bodies are all-copper, and come in "hot" red for the Hondas, black for the Kawasaki. All Derale ATV kits retail for $49.95, and include all mounting hardware. Contact Derale Oil Coolers, Dept. CG, 17291 Mt. Herrmann, Fountain Valley, California 92708.



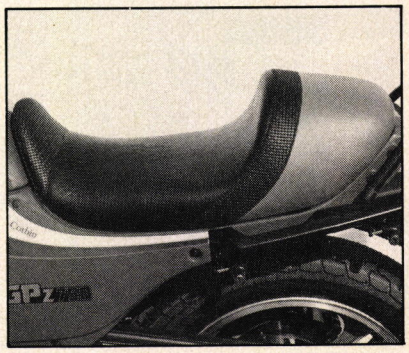


Hogged-Out Hogs: If the standard 74-cubic-inch mill leaves your Harley a casualty of the modern-day stoplight wars, perhaps Café Company's big-inch motor can help. The "Magnum" powerplant displaces 120 cubic inches, and is claimed to produce more than 100 horsepower. The big motor kit includes a high-flow aluminum head with bigger valves and raised ports, forged pistons, ductile-iron cylinders and dual carbs. Cost of the handmade kit is $2595 from Café Company, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 712, Grass Valley, California 95945.

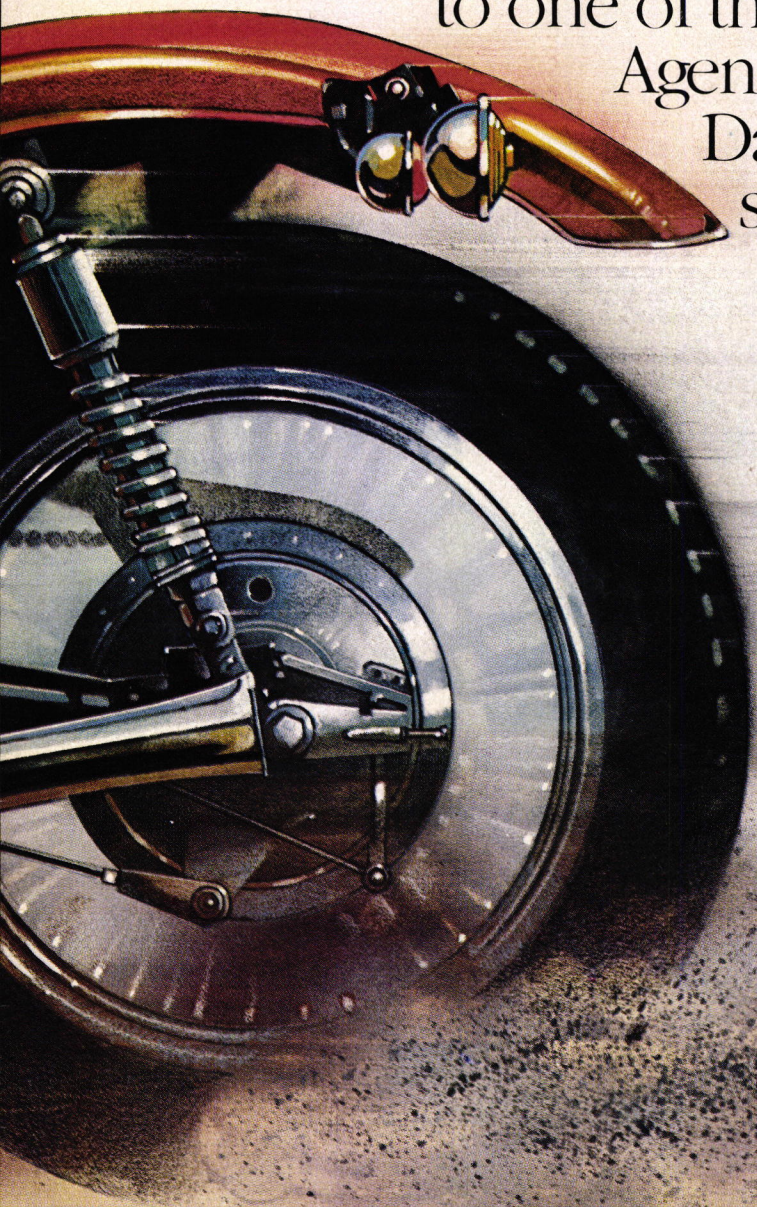


Sporty Silhouette: The "Cruiser," a handlebar-mounted fairing from Silhouette, is the sporty entry in the company's Concept II series. The unit's design allows air to pass between the fairing's lower edge and the headlight nacelle which, Silhouette claims, reduces air turbulence. The universal-fit fairing includes Silhouette's four-point, quick-release mount. The Cruiser sells for $89.95 in clear, $99.95 in tinted plexiglass. To order, contact Silhouette Fairing Systems, Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 1672, Martinsville, Indiana 46151.

So-Low-Saddle: Corbin's new "Gunfighter" sportseat is for the rider who wants a distinctive sporting look combined with a low seating position. The "Gunfighter" fits 1983 and '84 Kawasaki GPz750s and the 1984 750 Turbo, and is available in black with either red or silver accents. The cast-foam pad is mounted over a lightweight baseplate, then covered with Naugahyde, and the seat height is two inches lower than the stock saddle, according to the manufacturer. The complete outfit retails for $149.00 from Corbin Pacific, Dept. CG, 123-C Lee Road, Box 1562, Watsonville, California 95077.



You could look for better insurance, but you'd just be spinning your wheels. Dairyland Motorcycle Insurance offers good rates, good service, renewal discounts of up to 25%, and a way to spread out premium payments. There's even a way to get a full year's protection for less than a full year's premium. And if your bike is over 600cc, you may qualify for our Preferred Large Cycle Program, which offers special rates to this special class of riders. So talk to one of the 40,000 Independent Agents who represent Dairyland. And stop spinning your wheels.



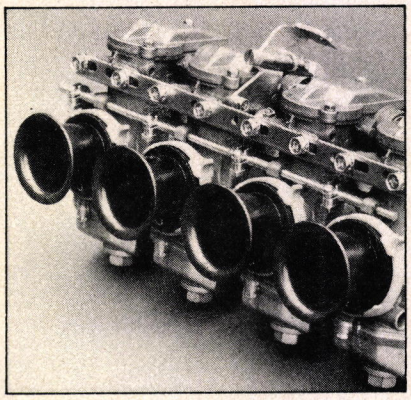
Dairyland® Insurance

Motorcycle Insurance.
Good rates for good riders.

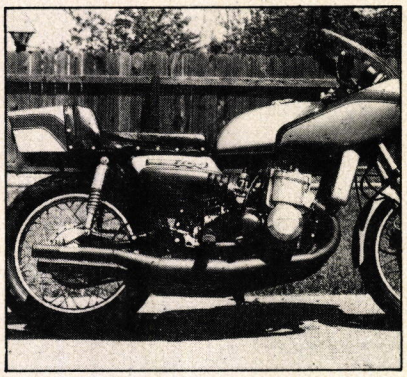
In Texas, available through Dairyland County Mutual Insurance Company.

Motomart

Mighty Mixers: Racebikes equipped with Keihin CR smoothbore carburetors have racked up an impressive list of victories in competition; now the high performance carbs are available to fit many stock machines. The standard, 33mm carb bodies can be sleeved down to 26mm, and feature adjustable bore-centers, which allow easy adaptation to most inline-fours. The Keihins retail for $495 per set, and come with plastic velocity stacks. For some smooth talk, contact Ontario Moto Tech, Dept. CG, 6850 Vineland Avenue, Unit 16, North Hollywood, California 91605.

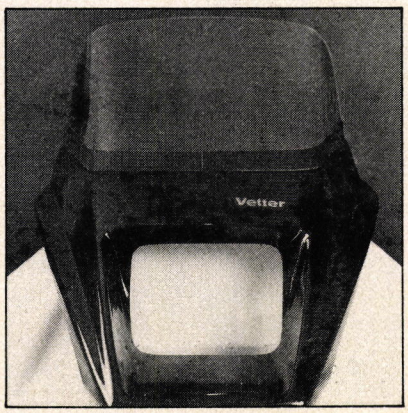


Wedge Sledge: B & F's new "Moriah" fiberglass motorcycle trailer has 24 cubic feet of cargo space tucked away under its aerodynamic lid. The Moriah weighs 150 pounds, has dual-leaf suspension with roller wheel bearings and range-B tires, and has a load rating of 750 pounds. The Moriah features a 10-lamp lighting system, dual-locking lid clasps, chrome wheel covers, a deck luggage rack, and retails for $895, from B & F Specialties Bike Trailer Sales, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 1313, Des Plaines, Illinois 60018.

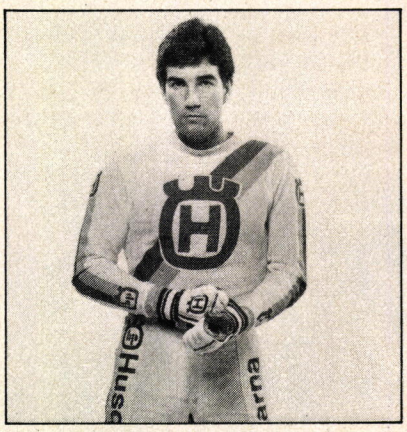


Buffalo Pipes: Wirges, a longtime manufacturer of expansion chambers for three-cylinder Kawasakis, has developed pipes to fit the "Water Buffalo," Suzuki's GT750 two-stroke. The Wirges three-pipe system is lighter than the stock exhaust, allows retention of the centerstand, access to the oil drainplug and filter, and features internal baffles augmented by glasspack stinger mufflers. The company also makes exhaust systems for the Suzuki GT380 and GT550; each system retails for $224.95. For more information, contact Wirges Creative Performance, Inc., Dept. CG, RR#2, Princeton, Illinois 61356.

New V-Sting: Vetter Products, of Windjammer fame, has just introduced a sport fairing called the Sting. The handlebar-mounted Sting is available in black, silver or red ABS plastic, and comes with a DuPont Lucite windscreen which attaches to the fairing body with adhesive foam. The Sting can be ordered with either a round or rectangular headlight opening, to fit many popular motorcycles, and the fairing, hardware included, weighs under five pounds. It retails for $139.95 from your local dealer, or from Vetter Products, Inc., Dept. CG, Rantoul, Illinois 61866.



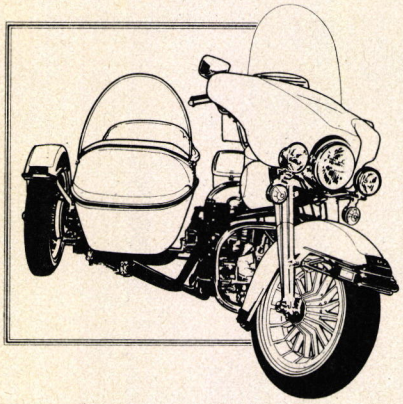
Husky Duds: Now the official uniform of Team Husqvarna can be yours. The team jersey, a 50/50 blend of polyester and cotton, retails for $19.95; a cotton-mesh version, intended for hot weather riding, sells for four dollars less. The Husky pants feature Spandex side panels, foam hip pads, and knee and shin guards. Retail price for the pants is $105.00. The Husqvarna riding clothes are available in popular sizes from Husqvarna Motorcycle Company, Dept. CG, 4925 Mercury Street, San Diego, California 92111.



Slippery Synthetic: Klotz' new, low-friction, synthetic lubricant for four-stroke engines represents a significant advance over conventional motor oils, or so says the manufacturer. The new lubricant is said to have greater shear quality and thermal stability for improved throttle response, less engine drag and greater gas mileage. The Klotz synthetic can also be mixed with non-synthetic motor oils. The lubricant is available in 10W/30, 10W/40 and 10W/50 weights, and sells for $4.95 per quart in motorcycle dealerships.

WISHBOOK

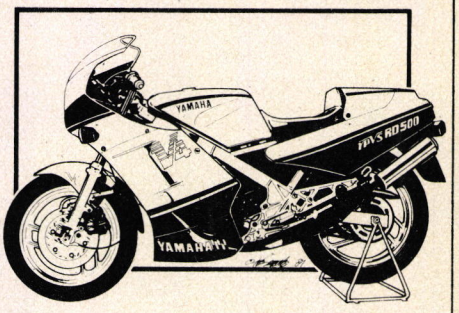
Minutes from the Last Meeting of the Council of Motorcycle Futurethink



It's obvious that if you want a factory sidecar rig that's not a Harley, you have to build it yourself. Why doesn't one of the Big Four market a purpose-built sidecar rig? Certainly, they have the technology to mate a reliable, water-cooled, fuel-injected engine, a chassis designed for a sidecar and the car itself with better results than a backyard mechanic could muster.

And what's to stop them from installing an air-conditioning system for the passenger? All the electronic goodies that only weigh down the average touring bike could easily be fit somewhere on a fully dressed rig. Not everyone will want a sidecar buried in LCD readouts, but from the looks of all the Voyagers sold, there's a market out there somewhere for a vehicle like this.

Mercer J. Hilliard
Las Vegas,
Nevada



The time is right in America for a whole new breed of street-legal copies of the roadrace machines that Yankee heroes like Freddie Spencer and Kenny Roberts have ridden to world championships. The RD500 promises to be just such a "replicracer," but it will only be available outside the U.S. But think how exciting it would be not only if that machine were for sale here, but if you could also choose from a 500cc vee-three Honda, a square-four Suzuki 500 and maybe even some larger/smaller versions of those same bikes. With America's renewed interest in sportbiking and roadracing, along with catalytic-convertor technology for two-strokes, such motorcycles could stand a reasonable chance for success in this country.

Herb Thielmann
Mill Valley, California

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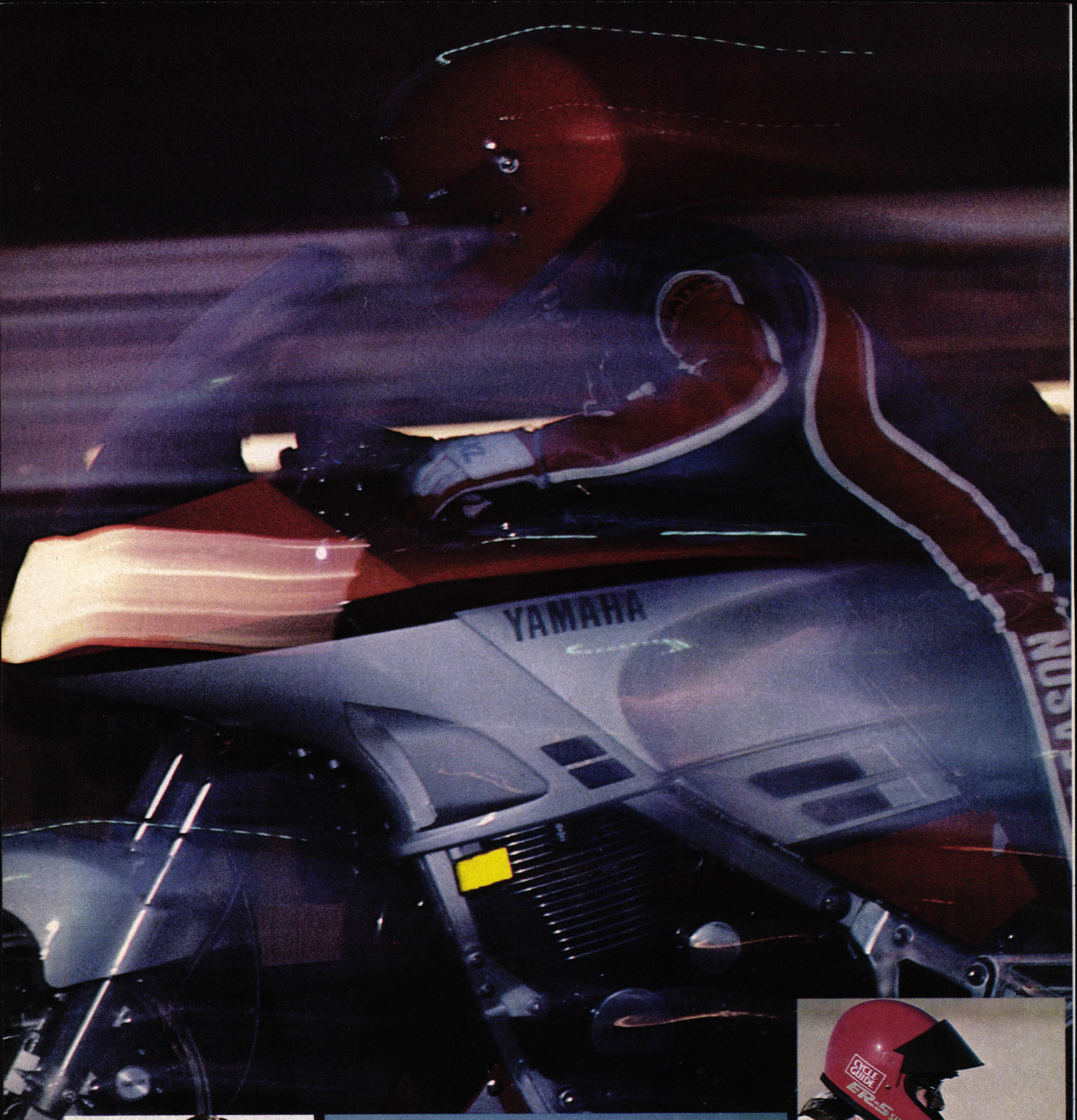
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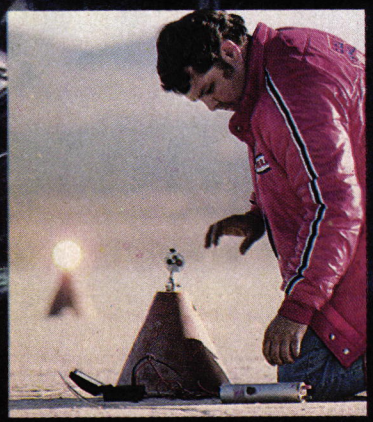

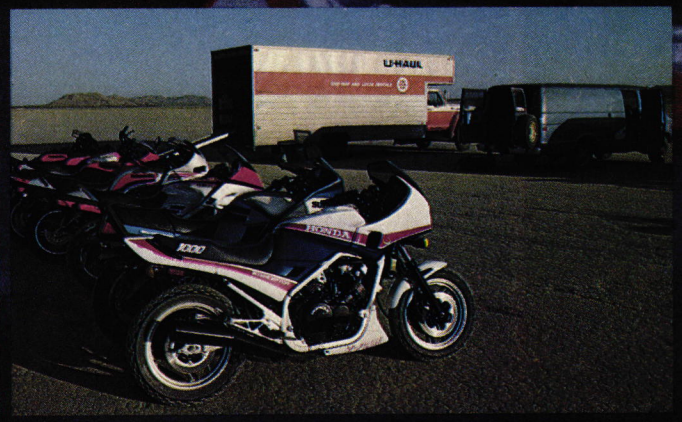
U-HAUL
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CYCLE GUIDE
ER-5 SHIELD

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN:

Speed Wars II: The Sequel

"There's always someone younger and quicker out there."

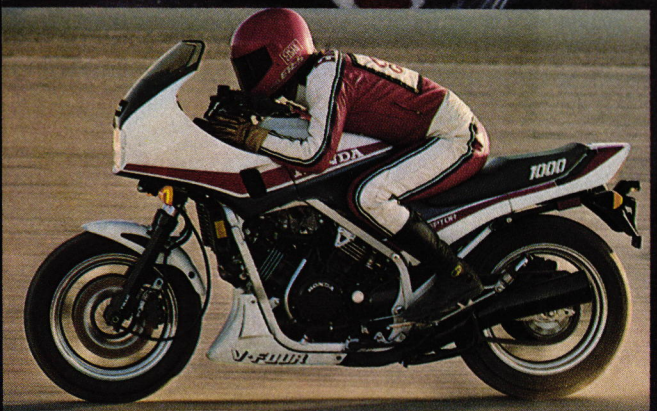
• Honda VF1000F Interceptor • Honda V65 Sabre
• Kawasaki GPz1100 • Kawasaki Ninja
• Kawasaki 750 Turbo • Suzuki GS1150ES • Yamaha FJ1100

BY PAUL DEAN

Being the fastest bike in the world is a lot like being the fastest gun in the West: It's a title you're not likely to keep for long. Because once you have it, you're faced with an endless stream of challengers, each obsessed with but one thing—to shoot you out of the saddle and take over the top spot. And no matter how fast you are, sooner or later, one of them will succeed.

That certainly is grim news for Kawasaki's 750 Turbo. In our Fastest Streetbike competition back in October of 1983, we proved that the Turbo was, hands-down, the hottest thing on two wheels, the uncontested King of Speed for 1983. But this is 1984; and in true gunfighter tradition, a whole new troupe of challengers is lined up and ready to shoot it out for this year's title. Some of them are entirely new models that didn't exist last year, others are revamps or variations of machines that have been around a while. But either way, they all have been dispatched from their respective assembly lines with orders to carry out one mission: to gun down the Kawasaki Turbo and thus stand alone as the fastest streetbike in the land.

Obviously, only one of them can succeed. And determining which one that is—if, in fact, any of them are capable of outdueling the Turbo—was what prompted the re-creation of our Fastest Streetbike shootout, this time with 1984's hottest challengers. But don't be misled into thinking that what you're about to read is a traditional "road test" in any way, shape or form. You won't see even a mention of qualities such as handling,



PHOTOGRAPHY • 1984 VIC HUBER

Continued

comfort, fuel mileage or the degree of difficulty involved in adjusting the valves. Because if it isn't something that can be expressed in miles per hour or elapsed time, it's not germane to the subject under discussion here: speed.

It's equally important to be just as narrow-minded in the selection of motorcycles, as well. No sense in cluttering up the pages with pictures and accounts of machines that couldn't muster enough speed to win if dropped down a mineshaft. That's why, after closely examining the performance parameters—both actual and claimed—of all possible candidates, we eventually whittled the list down to seven finalists. Those bikes represented the only machines on the market that seemed to have the kinds of audacious horsepower and outrageous acceleration that would be needed to win this high-speed duel.

One of those seven was, of course, the incumbent champion, the Kawasaki Turbo. After all, any shootout of this year's hyperformance hardware wouldn't have been complete without the bike that had dominated the quarter-mile competition the year before. The same reasoning applied to our inclusion of Kawasaki's GPz1100, for that bike and the Turbo had finished in a dead heat for first place in last year's top-speed run-offs. And since both of these Kawasakis are, for 1984, virtually identical to their 1983 counterparts, they promised to perform at least as well.

For 1984, the list of players had grown to seven; seven of the quickest, fastest hyperformance weapons on the planet.

Suzuki's newest entry, however, the GS1150ES, seemed likely to significantly better the performance put forth by that company's participants in 1983's Speed Wars, the GS1100ES and the 1100 Katana. The new Suzuki uses essentially the same engine design as the previous models, but with 60cc of additional displacement, considerably more horsepower and an all-new chassis. And based on performance data submitted by Suzuki, at least, the 1150 had to be considered one of the favorites to win the whole shooting match.

But not if Honda had anything to say about it. That company was represented by both the VF1000F Interceptor and the V65 Sabre, a fearsome pair of vee-four powerhouses if ever there was one. Last year, Honda's sole entry, the V65 Magna cruiserbike, had finished second to the Kawasaki Turbo in the quarter-mile, but due to its large frontal area and high drag

coefficient, had managed only a last-place tie with the GS1100ES Suzuki in top speed. So the new 1100cc Sabre, which uses the same engine as the V65 Magna but belts out even more horsepower, was considered a candidate to turn the lowest E.T.; and Honda felt that the 1000cc Interceptor, which has less peak power than the Sabre but much better aerodynamics, would steal the top-speed honors away from the pair of Kawasakis that had worn them in '83.

Kawasaki, though, had a third entry in our '84 competition—the Ninja—which promised to give the two Hondas all they could handle. Its liquid-cooled, 16-valve engine displaces just 908cc, making it the smallest normally aspirated motor of the lot; but, as our road test of the Ninja (May 1984) had proven, its spectacular performance qualifies it as a strong candidate for top honors. Besides, its sizable displacement handicap made the Ninja the underdog of the event—and every competition needs one of those.

No one, though, was calling Yamaha's entry an underdog. To the contrary, the FJ1100 was our odds-on favorite to blow everything else into the weeds. And for good reason: We had come away from our test of the all-new, 16-valve, mega-powered FJ (pg. 46 in this issue) flabbergasted by the bike's astounding performance. We also thought it ironic that Yamaha, the company that didn't have a model we could even consider for our competition last year, seemed the most likely to win it all this year.

To do that, however, the FJ1100 would have to post the fastest speed at El Mirage dry lake, as well as the quickest

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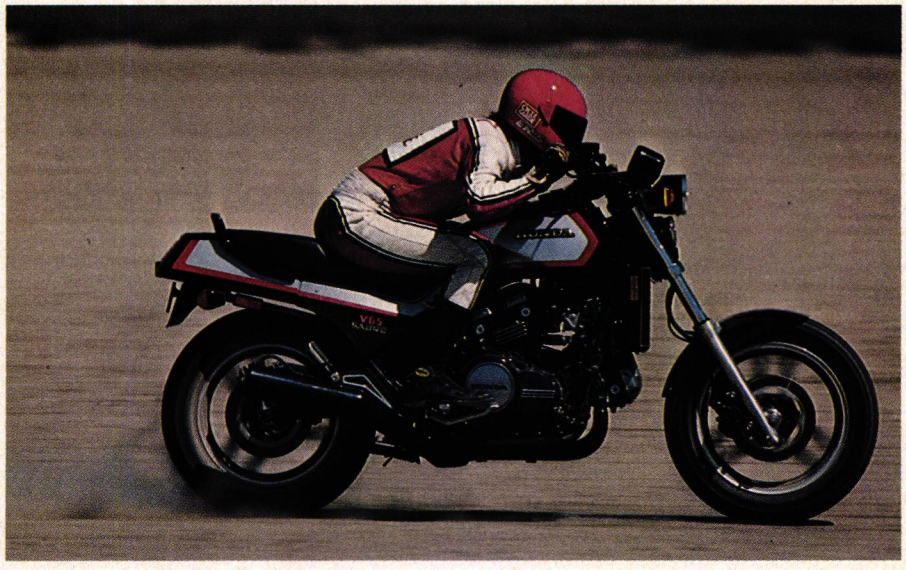
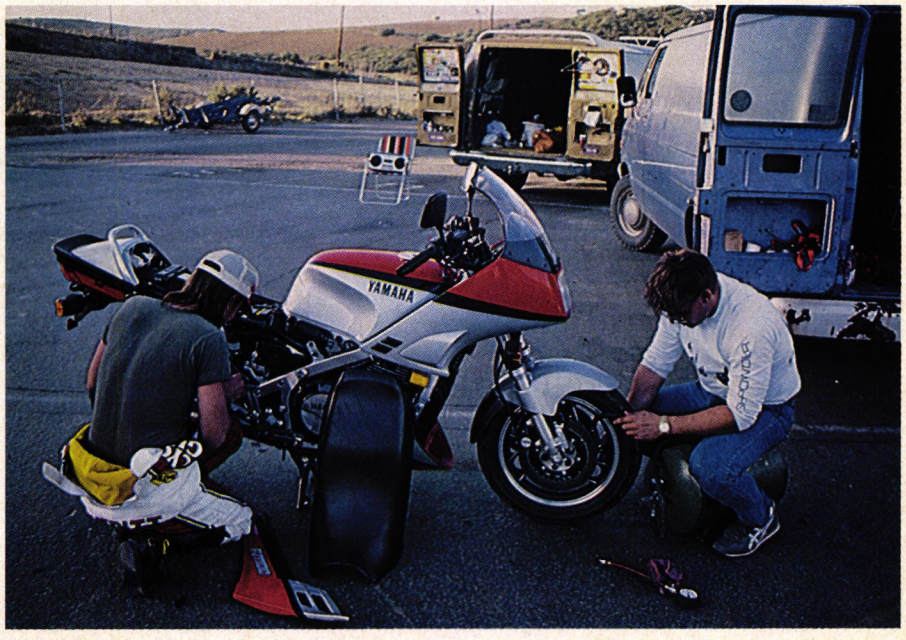
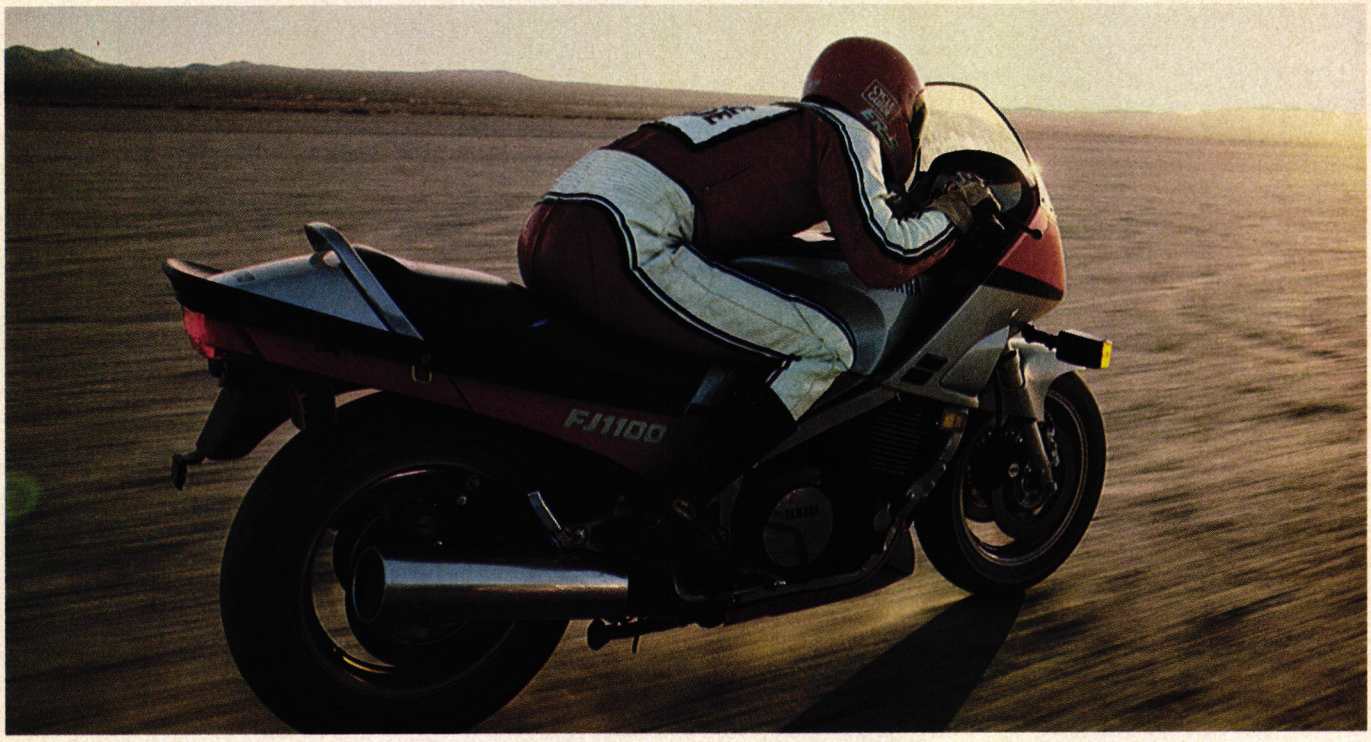




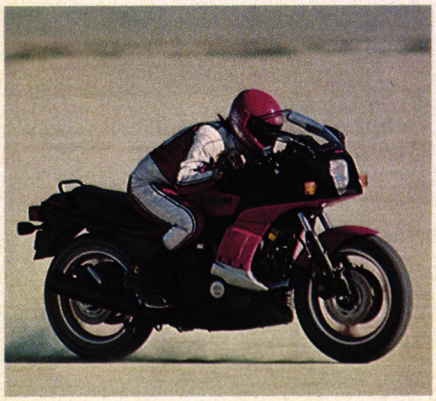


elapsed time on Carlsbad Raceway's quarter-mile strip. And that points out a misunderstanding that needs to be cleared up before going any further. See, literally speaking, "fast" refers to speed, whereas "quick" refers to time; thus the fastest bike is the one with the highest top speed, while the quickest is the one that posts the lowest E.T. The confusion stems from the popular use of the term "fast" to describe both speed and acceleration. But the two are not one and the same; and since there was no guarantee that any one bike would be both the fastest and the quickest, we had to be prepared for the possible need to crown two champions, one in each category.

We also were prepared for a problem that had given us fits in 1983: a tie. Last year, the 750 Turbo and the GPz1100 both consistently recorded identical top speeds, no matter how many times Charles Everitt whooshed them through the lights. Consequently, we drew criticism from many people who felt that our clocking procedures somehow were suspect. So this year, we contracted the services of Jack Dolan, an executive director of the Southern California Timing Association (SCTA), the organization that regularly stages record runs at both El Mirage and Bonneville. Dolan laid out a two-mile course on the dry lake and set up a 132-foot speed trap using the SCTA's official Chrondek timing lights; he also recorded all of our results to insure that we couldn't fudge on the numbers we published. And while that didn't exactly qualify our top-speed runoff as an official SCTA record meet, the presence of an unbiased expert and his timing gear (both of which are certified by the SCTA and the FIM) figured to put our top-speed findings above reproach—and eliminate any ties.

After the tire smoke and caliche dust had settled at Carlsbad and El Mirage, we had crowned a new King of Speed.

And, indeed, there were none. There were, however, a few surprises, including the failure of the two '83 winners to equal last year's speeds. This time around, the GPz1100 just wasn't as crisp and responsive as our '83 unit had been, despite hav-



ing been prepped by Kawasaki just prior to our runoffs; consequently, the GPz didn't even break 140 mph, which entrenched it firmly in last place. And even though the Turbo's 143.3121 clocking came close to duplicating its '83 effort, that still was only good enough for fourth place in the top-speed rankings, just ahead of the GS1150. On that big Suzuki, Everitt tried every trick in his repertoire to extract more speed, but the best the bike could muster was a disappointing 142.6200. That was a scant 2 mph faster than the sixth-place Sabre's clocking of 140.6250; but at least no one had expected the Sabre to do much better.

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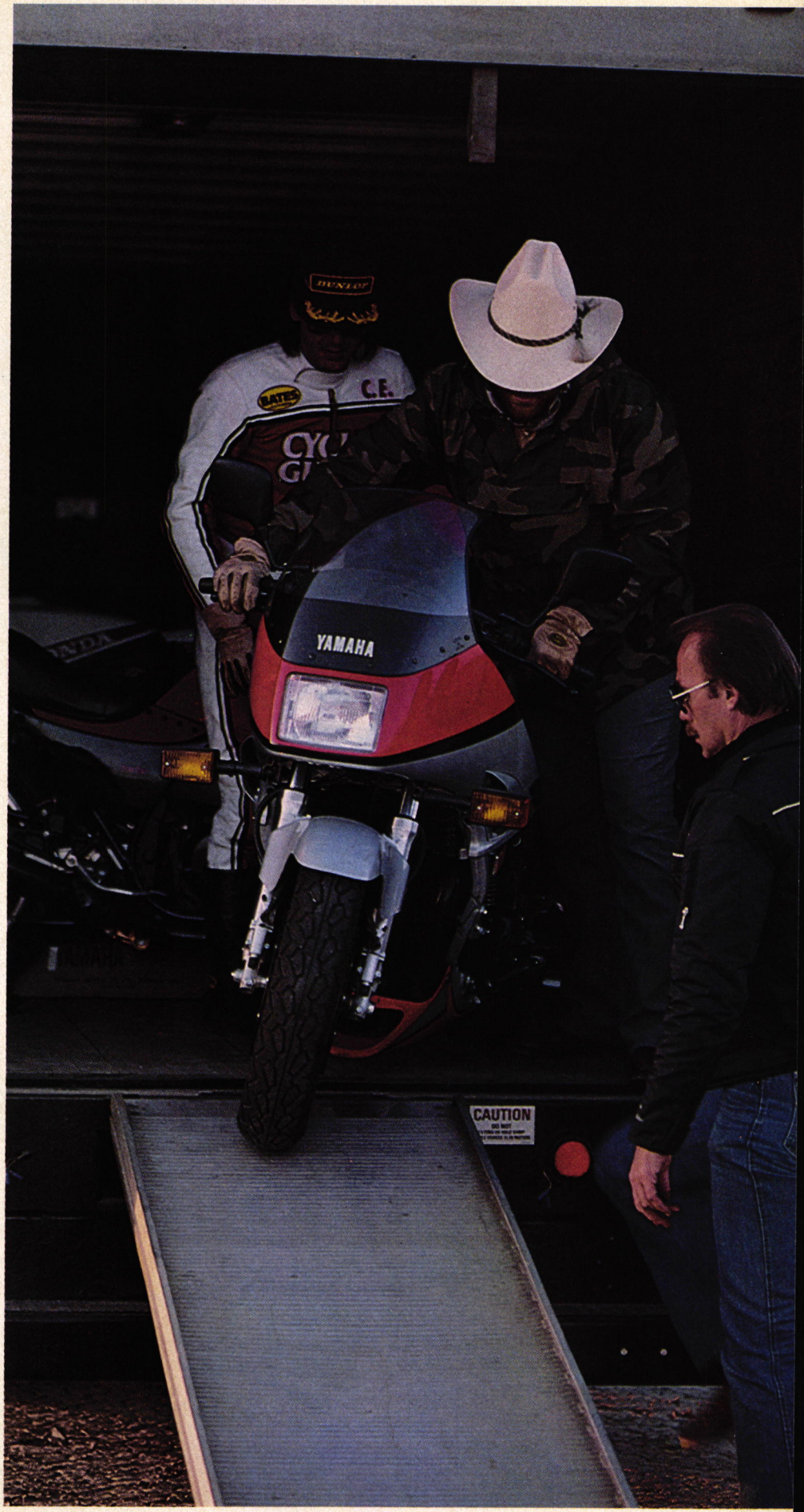
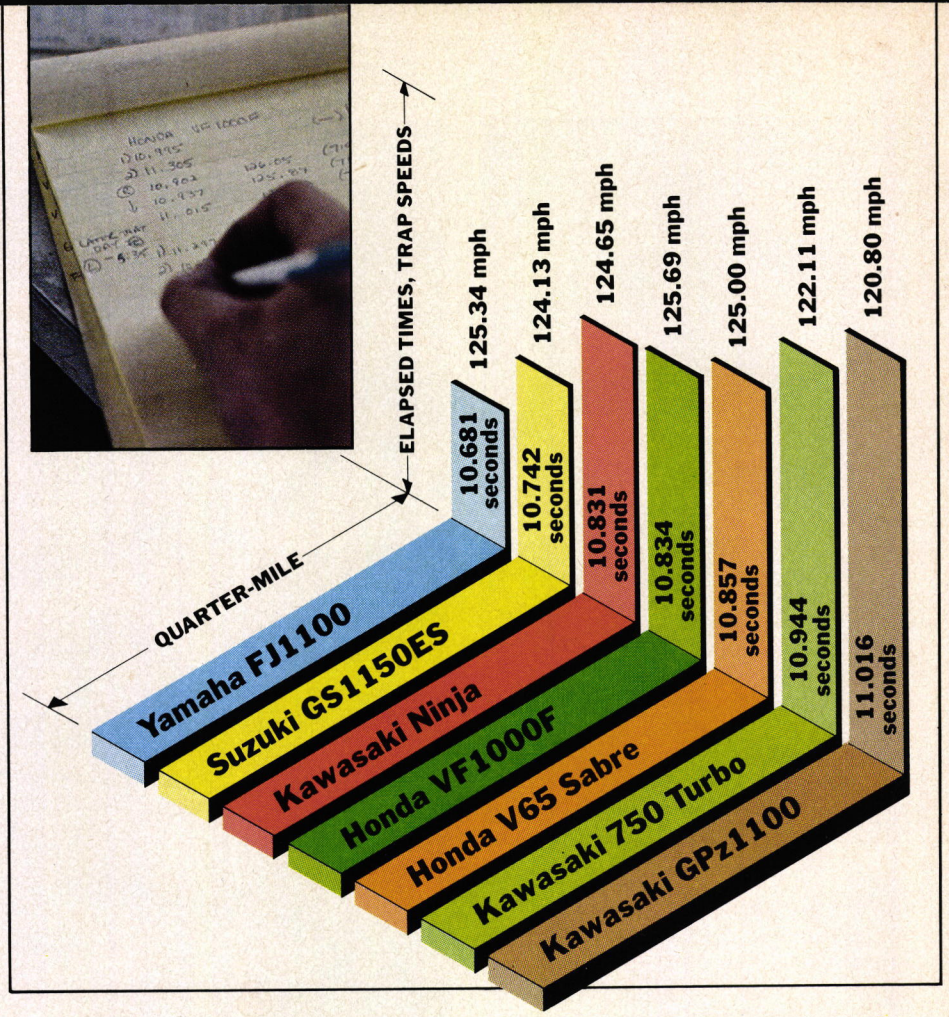


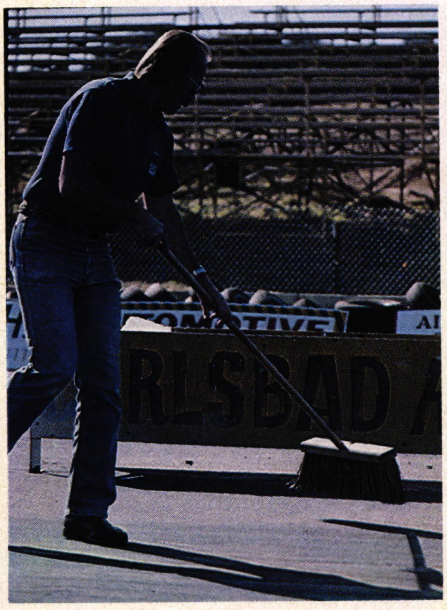
Meanwhile, the battle for first place turned into a high-speed dogfight, with a spread of less than 2 mph ultimately separating the top three finishers. And by the time the last machine had made a pass through Dolan's Chrondeks, we had crowned a new top-speed king: Honda's slippery, deceptively powerful VF1000F Interceptor had smoked the entire field with a run of 146.8187 mph. The FJ1100 Yamaha was nipping right at the Honda's heels, though, less than 1 mph behind at 145.9550 mph; and everybody's underdog, the "little" Ninja, finished an impressive third with a speed of 145.3710 mph. So not only were two of the top three finishers powered by the smallest unblown engines of the lot, but the bike with the biggest motor, the GS1150ES Suzuki, was way back in fifth place. So much for cubic power.

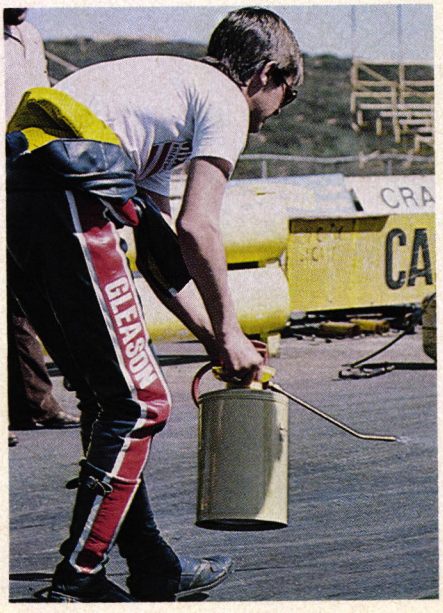
So much, too, for the idea of having one overall winner in our Speed Wars as in 1983. The only way that was going to happen, considering the turn of events at El Mirage, would be for the Interceptor somehow to outgun all the others in the dragstrip competition, something that even Honda itself figured was unlikely. And our hired gun for the assault on the quarter-mile—John Jay Gleason, the quickest draw in the West, East or anywhere else when it comes to coaxing the best times from production motorcycles—also didn't feel that the VF1000F could pull off a win at Carlsbad.

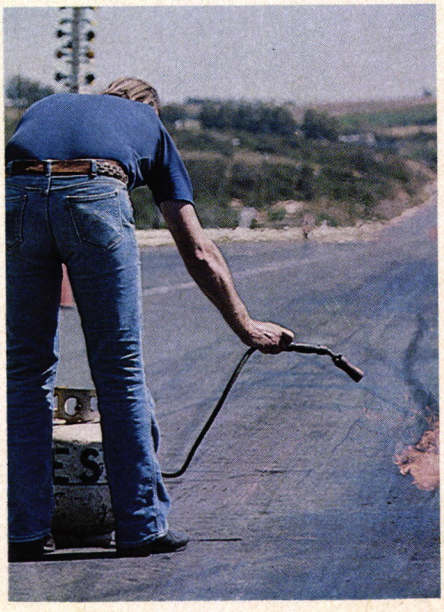
He was right. Because although the one-liter Interceptor usually came slingshotting off the line with a vengeance—highlighted by one ferocious, picture-perfect launch that Gleason termed "the leave of the year"—its quickest run of 10.834 seconds was only the fourth-best elapsed time. The VF did, however, post the highest terminal speed of the day, 125.69 mph, which is a good barometer of its tremendous power. But the bike also seems to have gear ratios meant to enhance its performance on a roadrace track or a twisty backroad rather than optimize its quarter-mile times. And that, as much as anything else, could be what kept the Honda Interceptor from succeeding last year's 750 Turbo as the E.T. King.



Anyway, the Honda did beat this year's Turbo, which once again was trounced by all of the new-for-'84 hardware. The blown Kawasaki managed only a sixth place with a 10.944/122.11 run, a full tenth of a second below its 1983 effort. Neither could the GPz1100 quite equal 1983's numbers, finishing last with a 11.016/120.80 performance. Kawasaki fans needn't be disheartened, though, for the Ninja comported itself admirably at Carlsbad, sneaking into third place ahead



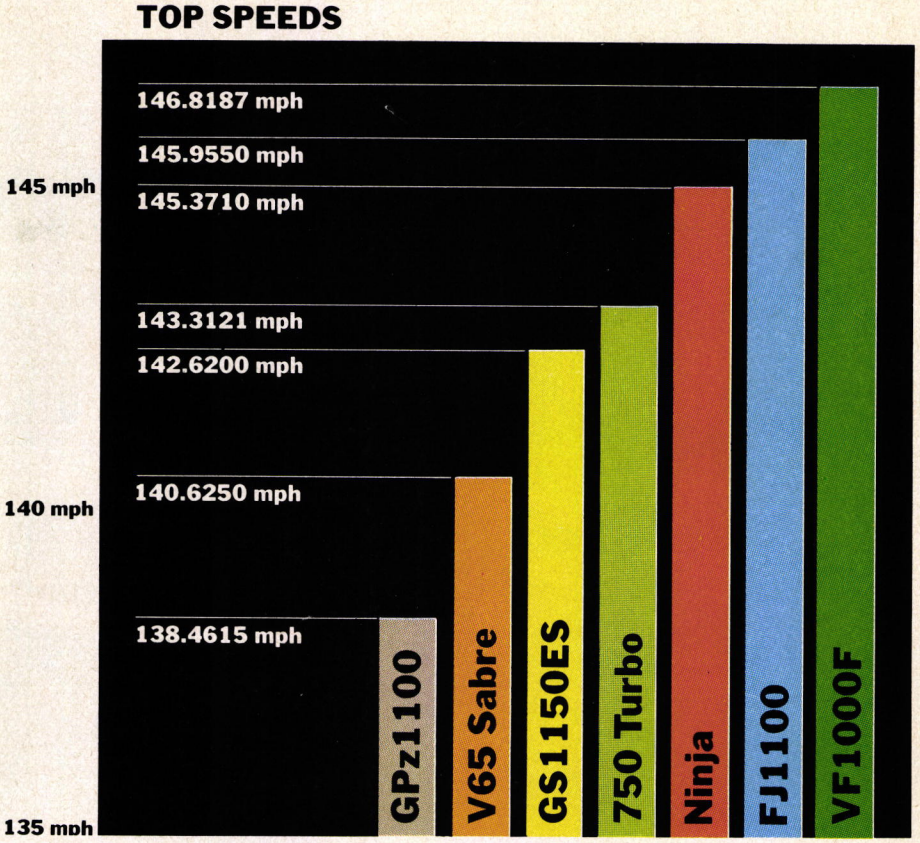




of the Interceptor. Despite what the Ninja was lacking in terms of cc inventory, Gleason was able to make best use of the bike's amazing top-end power and close-ratio six-speed gearbox to hustle through the lights in 10.831 seconds, just 0.003-second quicker than the VF1000F. And just behind the Interceptor was its stablemate, the V65 Sabre, at 10.857 seconds—a respectable E.T., but in this fast, er, quick company, nothing really to stand up and shout about.

There was plenty of excitement to please Suzuki and Yamaha fans, though, for just as predicted, the GS1150 and the FJ1100 went wheel-to-wheel right to the finish. Gleason insisted the Suzuki was the easiest of the bunch to launch quickly and consistently, thanks to its smooth clutch engagement and the tremendous midrange torque. Not coincidentally, the FJ was the second-easiest to get off the line, partly due to the huge contact patch put down by its immense 16-inch rear tire, and partly because its unusually low center-of-gravity minimized the bike's tendency to wheelie. And when you combine such excellent holeshot capabilities with the prodigious horsepower outputs of both engines (their makers both claim "around" 125 hp), it's easy to understand why the final confrontation came down to these two performance missiles.

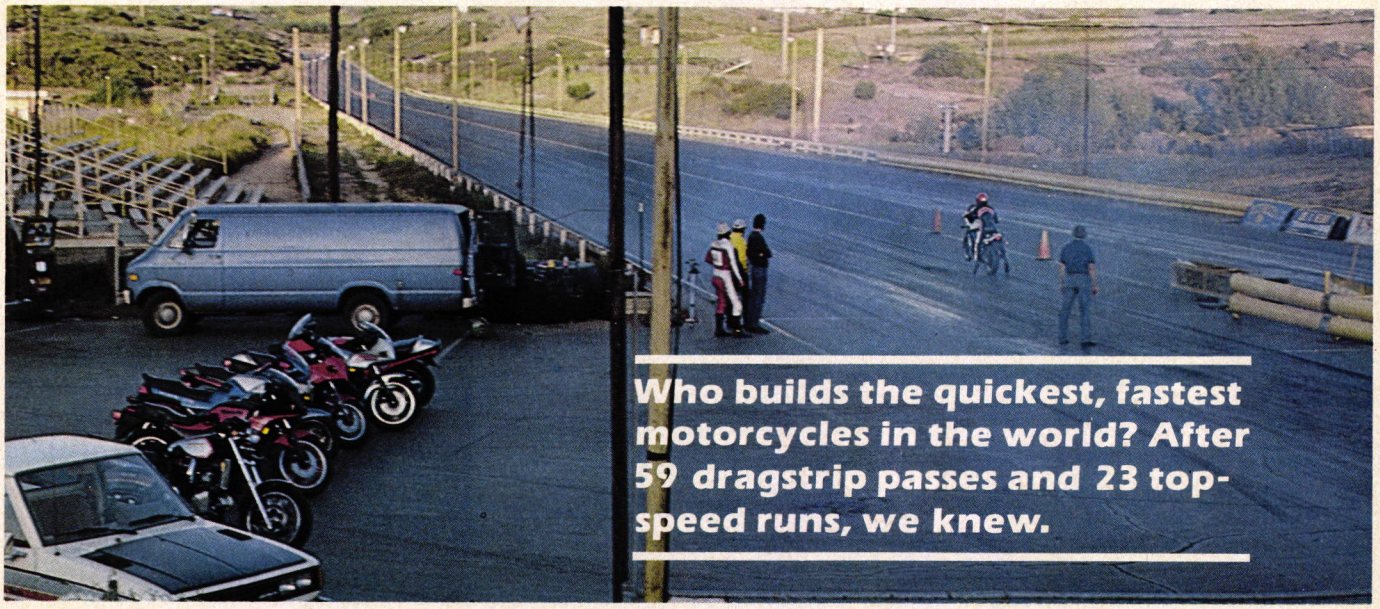
But in the end, the Suzuki, despite its 38cc displacement advantage, was no match for the potent Yamaha. The FJ1100 scorched Carlsbad's slick tarmac with a 10.681-second/125.34-mph run, putting it out of the Suzuki's reach. Because despite numerous concerted, almost maniacal efforts by Gleason, the GS couldn't improve on its best time of 10.742/124.13. So just as the VF1000F had established itself as the world's fastest stock motorcycle, so had the FJ1100 proven to be the world's quickest.



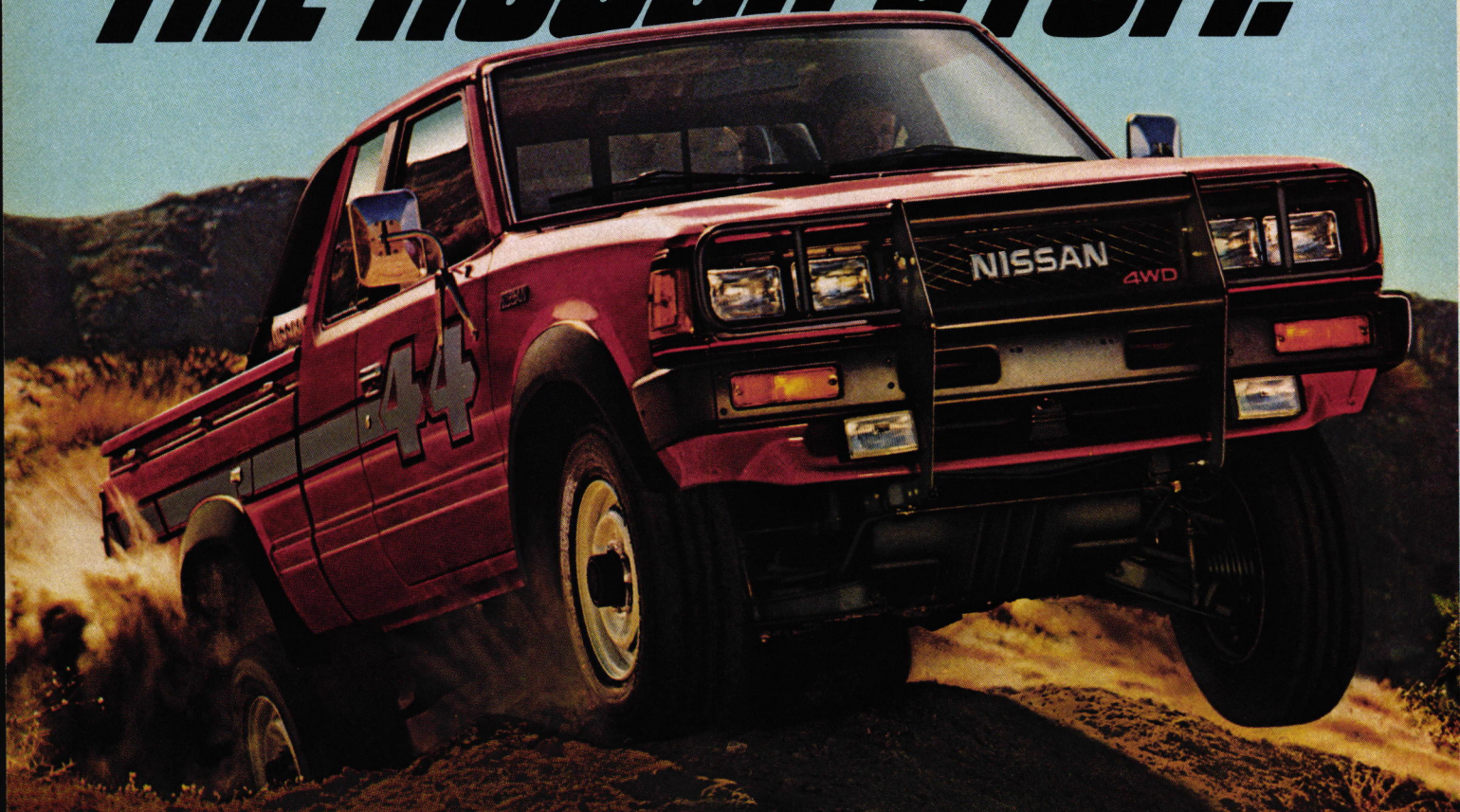
The problem, though, was that despite all our efforts, we still had no overall winner—not, at least, if we went strictly by the numbers that the seven bikes had generated, for no machine had emerged as both the fastest and the quickest. We had, however, collected sufficient evidence to lead us to one inescapable conclusion: The absolute King of Hyperformance for 1984 is Yamaha's brightest new star, the FJ1100.

Consider this: The Yamaha finished an extremely close second to the VF1000F in top speed, whereas the Honda managed only a comparatively distant fourth-place in the quarter-mile. Moreover, the fact that the Yamaha turned the lowest E.T. carries added significance, since in this country, the ability to accelerate quickly is held in higher regard than the ability to attain a high speed.

In your opinion, that might not be enough reason to call Yamaha's FJ1100 the hottest thing on the streets for 1984. But ours, it is. •



NISSAN HANDLES THE ROUGH STUFF.



You're looking at the business end of Nissan's newest outback brute: the 1984 Nissan 4 x 4.

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GUIDE LINES

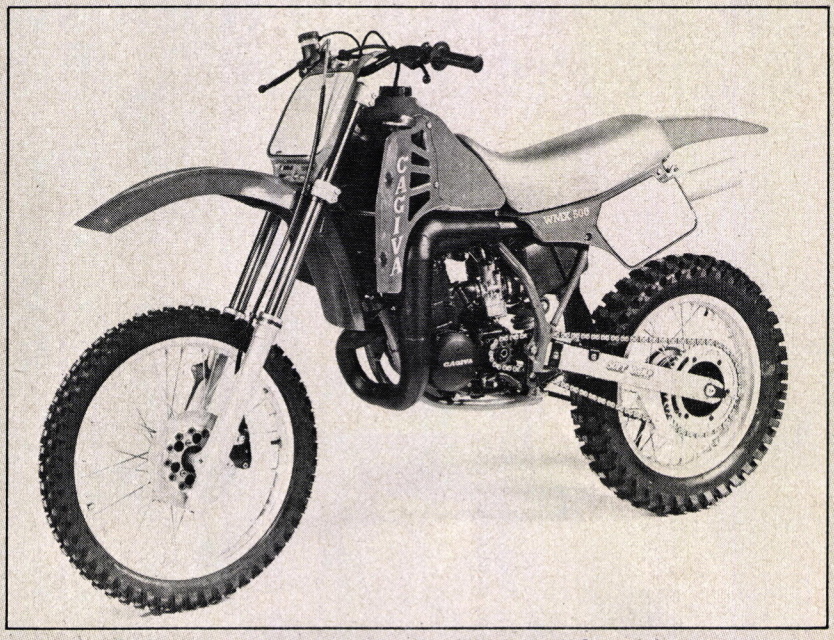
Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS

COMING SOON

Chromed engine pieces and a disc wheel put this factory custom in a class by itself

And as the tank graphics say, it's a "Genuine Harley-Davidson."



Cagiva is fully serious in its plans to make a big splash in the U.S. market

And leading off with a liquid-cooled Open-classer is a good start.

• Harley-Davidson's newest version of its Big Twin just might be "the most custom-styled production motorcycle in the world," as Milwaukee spokesmen claim. An FXRS forms the basis for the new model, called the FXRDG Disc Glide. While most of what differentiates the Disc Glide from other Harleys is purely cosmetic, Harley has done more than simply swap around existing hardware. Some of this bike's show look is the result of new production techniques. Show bikes have plenty of chrome, especially on their engines, and so does the Disc Glide. Twelve of the bike's aluminum engine covers have been chrome-plated, something reportedly never before done on production-line parts due to the difficulties in plating aluminum. The Disc Glide's paint and graphics are show-quality, too, because Harley has devised a way to blend the tank graphics into the paint without using decals. Custom-style wheels are fitted to this machine, too, with a 16-inch stamped-aluminum disc at the rear and a 19-inch wire-spoke wheel up front. And the Disc Glide's seat and passenger pad have brown leather inserts to coordinate with the bike's candy-burgundy paint. The Disc Glide is the kind of bike many Harley owners build on their own. This time the factory has done it for them, in one ready-to-roll $8199 package.

• Not all that's new on the Disc Glide is simply cosmetic, however. The FXRDG is also the first Harley to use the company's new lightweight, diaphragm-style clutch. This latest running change for all of Harley's Big Twins is an all-aluminum clutch assembly, which replaces the old-style all-steel inner and outer clutch baskets and pressure plate. H-D claims this new clutch is lighter than the unit it replaces, and also reduces lever effort.

• The Cagivas are coming and a couple of interesting models have surfaced recently, though only one will likely make it to the U.S. The one that's on the way over is the WMX 500, a 488cc liquid-cooled motocrosser. This Italian Open-classer, with its disc front brake and Cagiva Soft Damp single-shock rear suspension, was developed in America and should be on sale as you read this.

• The company's Cresta 350, however, most likely will stay in Europe. This machine is a variation on Cagiva's trials bike, modified to suit riders who aren't actually trials competitors yet who still appreciate a quick-handling woods bike. The Cresta 350 has a seat that's both taller and wider than the one on Cagiva's competition-only trials machine. And to assure that there's enough fuel available for lengthy rides, the bike has a small auxiliary fuel jug that clips on at the rear.

• Although it's still early in the year, the first 1985 Japanese models are already starting to appear. The very first is a new three-wheeler from Kawasaki, the KLT 160. This ATV debuts a few firsts for Kawasaki, too. It's powered by a 153cc SOHC four-stroke single, an all-new

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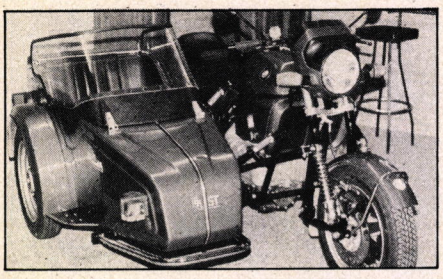
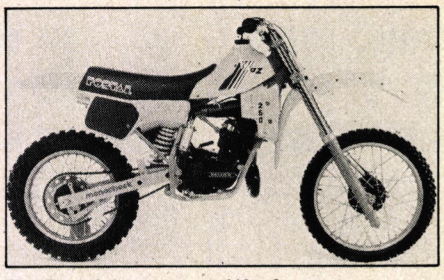


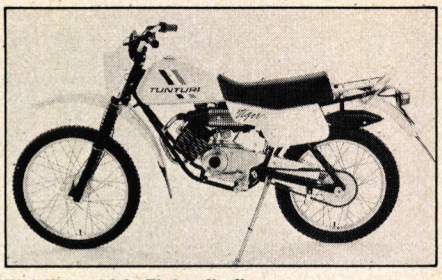
The Dutch have already built a hybrid

EML's modified K100 does hack duty.



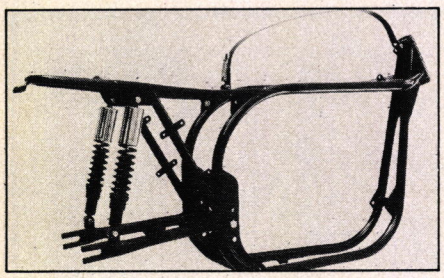
The French have entered the fray

With a Moto Portal 250 MXer.



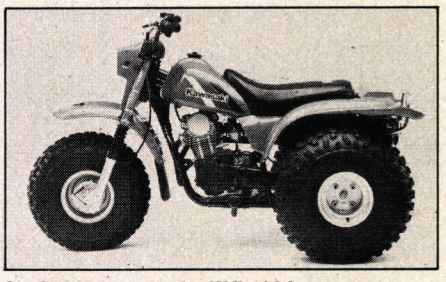
The Tiger 50 is Finland's finest

Using parts bought all over Europe.



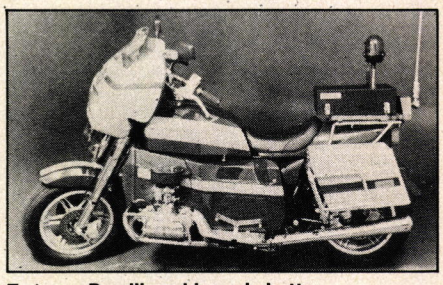
Brooklands is building a classic

It's a repro of the famous Featherbed.



Shaft drive moves the KLT 160 in a new way

Backwards—this Kawasaki has reverse.



To some Brazilians bigger is better

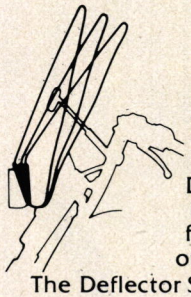
The latest Amazonas is rolling proof.

engine. The trike's five-speed transmission with reverse and its shaft final drive are also new for Kawasaki three-wheelers. The KLT 160's telescopic fork offers more than 3 inches of suspension travel, but the only suspension provided by the solidly mounted rear axle comes from a pair of low-pressure Dunlop radial tires fitted to this latest off-roader.

• It hasn't taken the aftermarket long to react to BMW's new K100. While riders in this country are still waiting for their first, up-close look at the new four-cylinder Beemers, they've been available in Europe long enough for the Dutch EML factory to develop and release a sidecar outfit for them. The sidecar itself is actually an existing EML model, but substantial changes have been made to the BMW it mounts to. The most obvious of those changes includes an all-new, Earles-type, leading-link fork, and 15-inch front and rear wheels fitted with Uniroyal radial tires. Now try to remember what a stock K100 looks like.

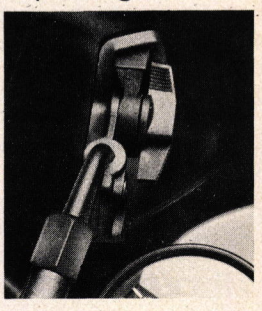
• And while you're searching your memory for that one, try to envision a standard Amazo-

New Deflector Screen™ with Rake-Adjust Wind Protection AND Sport Styling



National Cycle's new compact Deflector Screen™ offers excellent upper-body wind protection while also adding a sporty flair to your motorcycle. A Special Rake-Adjust™ mount allows you to easily adjust the mounting position to suit your own height, personal taste, or simply to match the lines of your bike. While the Deflector Screen can't match the outstanding wind protection of National Cycle's famous Plexifairing 3 , it is a terrific blend of comfort and style.

The Deflector Screen is available in two types, standard and LX. The inexpensive standard version has a shield made from acrylic and uses a U-Clamp mounting system. The deluxe LX version is made from super tough G.E. Lexan® Polycarbonate and features National Cycle's patented Quick-Set™ mounting system for easy 1 minute removal and reinstallation.



Either way, you'll get the absolute finest quality in motorcycle accessories—from National Cycle, of course.

national cycle

Mail Orders: 1984 Deflector application: N2590-clear screen;N2591-tinted screen;N2592-clear (Deflector Screen LX); N2593-tinted (Deflector Screen LX). These part numbers are universal for all year motorcycles with round or square exposed headlights and 7/8" round handlebars. For non-tubular bars, model #N2590, N2591 order both additional bags 47 and 62. And for #N2592, N2593 order both additional bags 47 and 53. For application to 1" Harley Davidson handlebars, N2590, N2591 only, order additional bag 63. Price: N2590 $39.95 N2591- $44.95 N2592 $69.95 N2593 $74.95, plus $10.00 shipping and handling. Bag 47, $12.50. Bag 62, $4.95. Bag 53, $8.33. Bag 63, $3.60. Send certified check or money order to National Cycle, 2200 Maywood Drive P.O. Box 158, Maywood, Il 60153-0158, 312-343-0400.

nas, because the Brazilian company has recently produced another variation: the 1984 Police/Military model. Like the other Amazonas models, the P/M is powered by an air-cooled VW engine, and this latest South American heavyweight has all the lights, bells, whistles and sirens any law-enforcement agency could need.

• Another police bike, one that seems to have been Coming Soon for a decade, is the Norton Interpol Mark II. While that rotary-powered project hasn't actually gone into production, details about it continue to leak out. Latest reports concern the bike's frame, a pressed-steel monocoque design with integral oil tank and a hard-plastic coating.

• While that Norton monocoque frame is a possibility for the future, Brooklands Motorcycles has a replica Norton Featherbed frame for sale right now. This Featherbed repro is a duplicate of the original, unlike the frame used on the Brooklands 40M Manx replibike. The 40M, introduced last year, is powered by an all-new Weslake-designed engine, so certain mounts and frame brackets vary from the stock Norton dimensions.

• But for trials riding of a more serious nature, another Italian company, CCE Design, has released its Puma 383. Many of the components fitted to this new, limited-production model are standard-fare trials equipment (Betor fork, Corte & Cosso shock, Grimeca brakes), but the bike's frame design is unusual for a trialer: The Puma 383's 318cc two-stroke engine is slung underneath a chromoly square-section-tubing frame. CCE Design plans to contest the 1984 World Trials Championships with one of these new bikes.

• France isn't generally thought of as a top producer of competitive motocross machinery, but the French do, indeed, build MXers. Proof of that involvement in dirtbike competition is the just-released 240 Cross from Moto Portal. The bike is powered by a 238cc liquid-cooled two-stroke Rotax engine, and features a single-shock rear suspension, drum-type brakes front and rear, and a claimed dry weight of 216 pounds.

• And while we're showing you bikes you might never actually get to ride, consider the Tunturi Tiger 50 from Finland. This little black-and-yellow lightweight is truly an international effort. It's assembled in Finland by Tunturi, powered by a Puch engine from Austria, and suspended both front and rear with Italian Paioli components.

FEDERAL CASES

• The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is in the two-wheel limelight again, and has scheduled a hearing to review alternate proposals to its 1-gram-per-kilometer hydrocarbon-emissions requirement for motorcycles. Last year CARB granted the motorcycle industry a one-year extension, until July 1, 1984, on the implementation of that emissions standard. The purpose of the extension was to allow the industry time to find means, other

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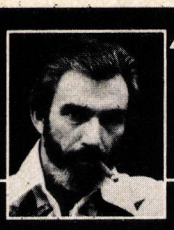

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I'm Russ Collins and for years, I've built, run and sold nothing but the best. And I'm not changing now. That's why R. C. Engineering is the specialist for Honda's new V4 engines. If you want every last bit of horsepower from a V4, from the brand new 500 to the awesome 1100, I'm the man to see.

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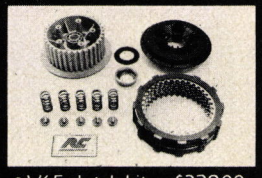

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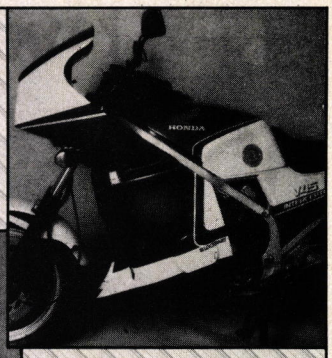

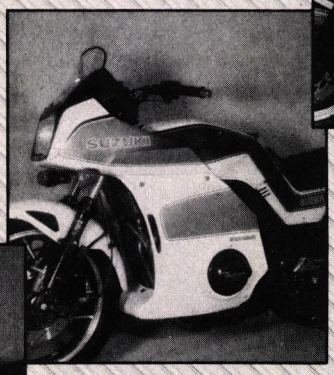

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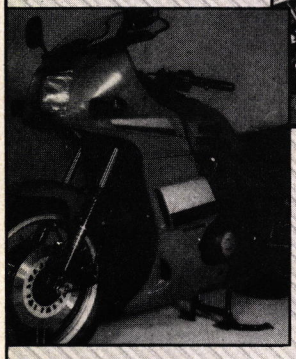

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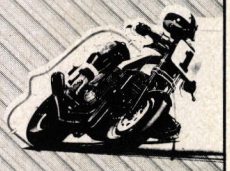

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GUIDE LINES *Continued*

than catalytic convertors, to satisfy the Board's proposed emissions levels. This latest hearing will consider three alternate solutions: a 1-gram-per-kilometer corporate average (as was speculated in Rumors); a sliding corporate average for hydrocarbon emissions based on production numbers, with a 1.5-gram upper limit for the first 5000 units made and a 1-gram ceiling for machines built later; or a 1.4-gram-per-kilometer corporate average that would apply to all motorcycle-engine groups, regardless of displacement. More on this as it develops.

• According to the AMA, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released its long-range forecast for traffic fatalities through 1990, and the figures show motorcycle accidents as the fastest-growing source of traffic fatalities in the country. Deaths due to motorcycle accidents, so goes this latest NHTSA line, will increase 56 percent by 1990 and account for some 6700 deaths annually. Of course, NHTSA predictions have been wrong before. In 1975, the agency forecast that traffic deaths would total 81,000 per year by 1985. Barring the possibility of wholesale slaughter on the highways during the next few months, that prediction will be off by almost one-half.

• California recently introduced legislation to establish a self-funded rider education program. According to the proposal, $2 would be added to the state's current motorcycle registration fee, with the estimated $1.3 million raised annually used to expand the California Motorcycle Safety Program, a rider-ed course already in effect. The legislation, AB 2489, would establish the California Motorcycle Safety Commission, an all-new agency, to administer the program. Commission members would be appointed by the governor and would be drawn from members of government agencies, motorcycle organizations and the public sector.

• And still on rider education, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation recently set up a national toll-free number to provide information on all rider-ed courses. Motorcyclists can call the new number, (800) 447-4700, for the address and phone number of the nearest rider-ed program in their area. The service offers a computerized search, giving the caller the local phone number for either the 20-hour Motorcycle Rider Course for new riders or for the 6 ½-hour Better Biking Program for experienced riders. The toll-free service lists all courses available within a 50-mile radius of the caller's zip-code area.

• In another safety-related item, the Snell Foundation reportedly soon will release new 1985 standards for helmets. Following the death last year of Dr. George Snively, a champion of the Foundation, the Board of Directors has been reorganized and expanded. It now includes three engineers, three physicians and an economist. The upcoming helmet standards reportedly will establish a dual-standard: one for motorcycle helmets, another for helmets used in special applications. Foundation spokesmen also say the new standards will reflect input and suggestions

Continued

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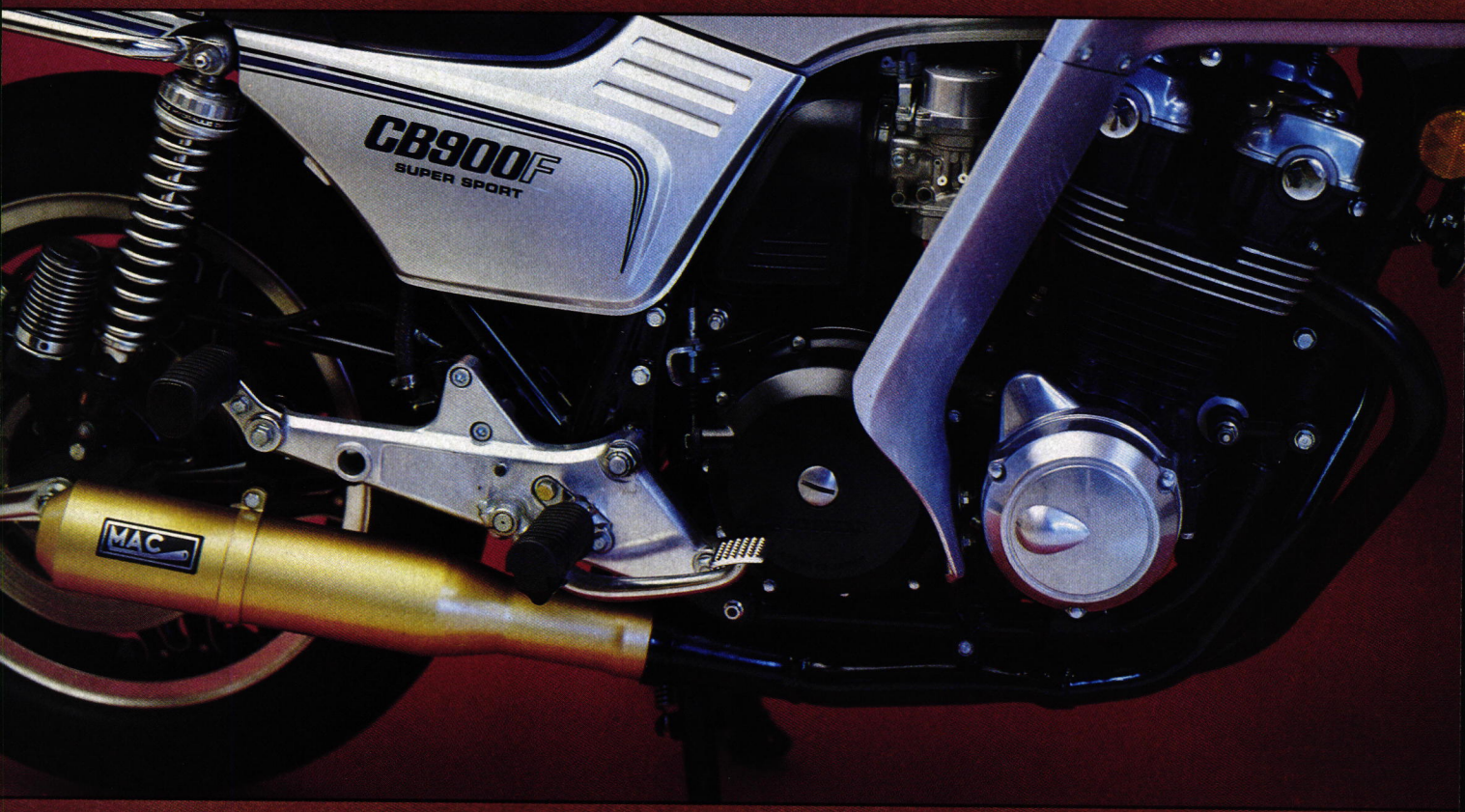

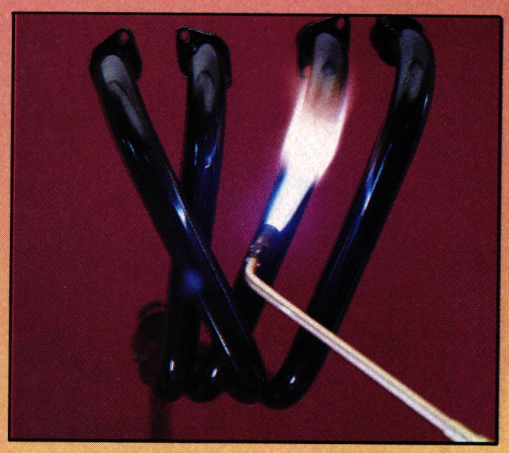

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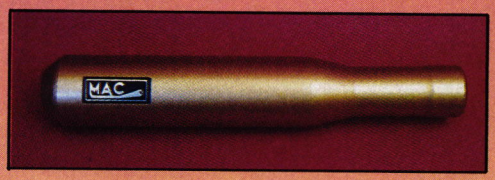

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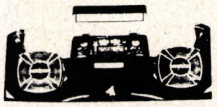

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received from racing organizations and helmet manufacturers.

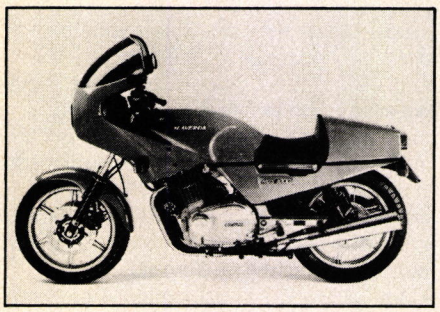
• And on the helmet-legislation front, Georgia's HB 723, a bill to make helmet use in that state voluntary, has encountered new opposition. In spite of a "do-pass" recommendation from a House subcommittee, the Georgia Medical Association has launched a campaign to short-circuit the bill, and has cited the "public burden" caused by helmetless motorcyclists involved in traffic accidents. Efforts by the AMA's Legislative Affairs Department in favor of HB 723 have met with little success, and the bill is stalled in a subcommittee.

• The AMA's attempt to identify and catalog road hazards unique to motorcyclists is well under way, however. The first phase of this project is a just-launched national survey. Questionnaires have been mailed to state and federal highway officials, motorcycle touring clubs and individual motorcyclists, asking for input on the most common types of road-design or maintenance problems each encounters. Once all the data is collected and analyzed, the AMA's Government Relations Department will advise association members on the most effective ways to work with highway officials to solve road-hazard problems that pertain to two-wheelers only.

• And riders in Nebraska and Pennsylvania might soon have a better chance of spotting those potential hazards for the association: Both states recently have introduced legislation requiring the daytime use of headlights for all motorcycles. The Pennsylvania proposal, HB 1474, would permit the use of headlight modulators, however.

HARD CASH

• The Japanese aren't the only manufacturers offering price cuts on two-wheeled hardware. Slater Bros. North America, U.S. importer for Laverda, has announced its own monetary enticement aimed at swinging riders over to the Breganze way of biking. Thanks to an adjustment in the dollar/lira exchange rate, all

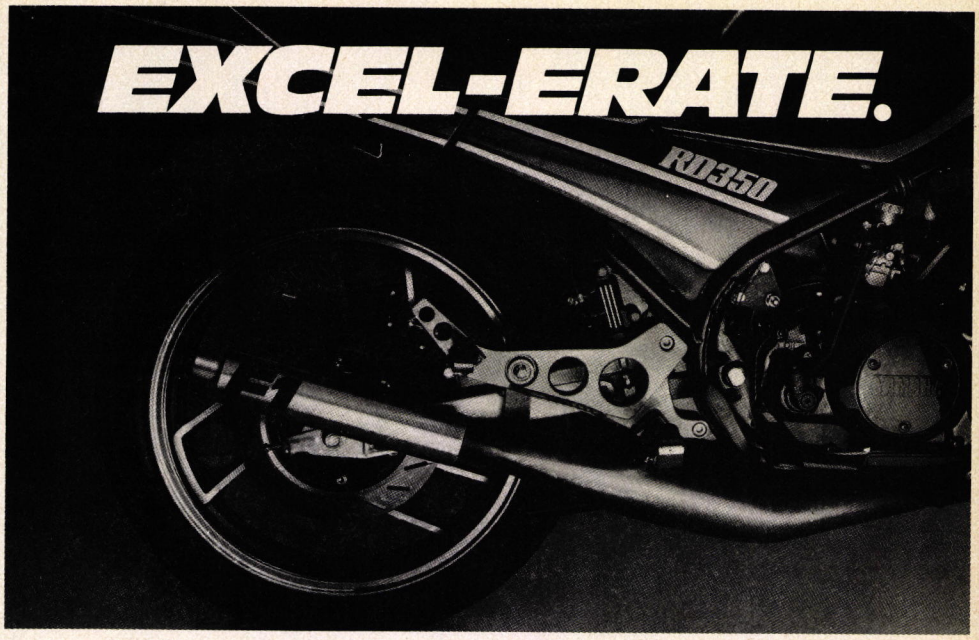


The Italians are entering the price wars

Laverdas now come with rebates.

Laverda models except the supersport Corsa now carry a $300 rebate, payable directly to the customer. With this rebate plan, the RGA 1000 and the Jota effectively cost $5200, the RGS 1000 will go for $5500 and the price of the top-of-the-line Laverda Executive drops to $5950.

Continued



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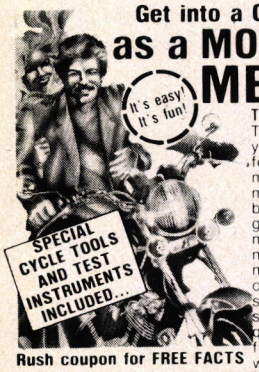

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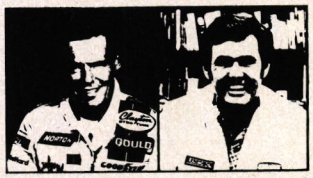

Bobby and Al Unser, race car drivers and motorcyclists. *"On the race track, we're both in total control. We approach off-road riding the same way. Reckless riding is stupid. And not very impressive to the hikers and campers we meet."*

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GUIDE LINES *Continued*

• While Harley-Davidson isn't including rebates to get riders interested in its machines, the company has begun a dealer-level test-ride program to get prospective riders on the new Harleys. Harley spokesmen say 80 percent of their dealers already have signed up to host a "SuperRide" test-ride promotion at their dealerships.

• This must be the season for enticements. Continental has announced its "Sport-Tour Ride of a Lifetime Sweepstakes," open to U.S. motorcyclists only. This promotional gambit is aimed at stirring up interest in the company's new SuperTwin sport tires. Riders have a chance to win an all-expense-paid motorcycle tour of Germany, culminating with a visit to the 1984 Cologne Motorcycle Expo. Details are available at all Continental tire dealerships, or by writing to the Sweepstakes headquarters at P.O. Box 82019, St. Paul, Minnesota 55182.

• And three-wheel racers needn't feel left out, because Kawasaki has just upped its contingency program for them. Pro-class three-wheel racers on Kawasakis now have a chance at part of that company's 1984 contingency fund of $38,250. The actual cash payouts will range from $250 for individual class wins to $2000 for series championships. Kawasaki's contingency money will be up for grabs at selected races only during the '84 season. The list includes 17 closed-course events and six off-road races.

RUMORS

• The rumormongers are wearing wide grins these days, confident that the vee-four Suzukis they predicted are on the way. In fact, some of these purveyors of the possible flatly state that both of the liquid-cooled powerplants they promised, a 700cc model and a 1200cc version, will be in this country within 90 days. How about that for confidence? Our spy network has never been known for its reticence, and it's certainly not holding back now.

• But maybe those wags will have to wipe off those smiles if events transpire as one Suzuki insider claims they will. This source doesn't deny the existence of the company's vee-four—which would be pointless, since Suzuki unveiled a pullback-bar, vee-four 750cc at a motorcycle show in Canada recently. But this inside line says the company has no plans for U.S. sale, at least not yet. We'll just have to wait on this one. However, when talk turns to a liquid-cooled inline-four, this man positively beams. So who do you believe?

• And all the loose talk centering on Suzuki doesn't concern only its two-wheelers, no sir. That company has a sizable commitment to four-wheel ATVs, as our gossips won't let us forget, and now these snoops want us to believe that Suzuki is planning some serious performance for the Quad Runner—including maybe a 250cc two-stroke engine. These guys just never quit. Or is it Suzuki that has pulled out all the stops? You decide.

• And while you're pondering that one, try this

latest bit of ATV gossip on for size. Honda, we're told, is considering a mass-merchandising program for at least one of its three-wheelers, and the name most often heard from the listening device in the corporate boardroom is Sears. Roebuck and Co. There's more: lookouts at the shopping mall swear this Honda-built ATV will be sold under the Sears label. Does that mean it will be a Kenmore? Will the color options be Appliance White, Almond and Harvest Gold? These questions remain to be answered.

• Something else that remains to be seen has Kawasaki's Ninja as the center of attention. A particularly vocal gossip group would have us believe that the 900cc and Japan-only 750cc versions of that company's liquid-cooled inline-four shortly will be followed by one more model: a 500. And just so there's no mistake about intent, these forecasters declare 1984 to be the last year for the entire air-cooled GPz line. Kawasaki, they say, will rest its 1985 performance image on engines with water jackets and 16 valves.

AFTER THE FACT

• Last February we commented on the recent surge of BMX stars and speculated on their chances of becoming the MX hotshots of the future. Not that they're doing so badly right now, though: Top pro BMX racers already earn more than $50,000 annually, and one of them, Greg Hill, is expected to gross even more than that during '84. As well he should; the man we described a few months ago as a 10-year-old is actually a 20-year-old man, president of his own company and a top-ranked racing pro for the last six years. In fact, Hill is the first BMXer to win races on equipment that he's designed and built. He still pedals, though. . . .

• And if you've been scratching your head trying to figure out where to look next for the Draftline motorcycling apparel offered by Maico U.S.A. as mentioned in the May issue, here's some help. Stop looking for Draftline; it doesn't exist. Maico U.S.A.'s riding equipment is marketed under the name Crossline.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• One of the best-kept motorcycling secrets of the mountains of Georgia is beginning to leak out, but Frank and Jeannie Cheek don't mind. The Cheeks own and operate the T.W.O. (Two Wheel Only) Motorcycle Resort, tucked away in Suches, Georgia. With the touring season now in full swing, riders in the Southeast, or in any part of the country for that matter, might want to break out the atlas and pinpoint Suches as a destination for summertime riding. After all, you don't often hear of a resort that: accepts bike travelers only (special permission is required to trailer in two-wheelers); is surrounded by mountain roads,

Continued

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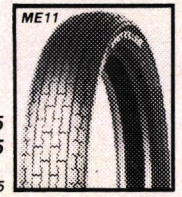

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HARD CASH:

The American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation

Taking motorcycling's history out of the dark corners.

• One of the best-kept secrets in this country is the fact that the motorcycle has a history even longer than the automobile's. It's a secret because, while there are scores of museums full of early automobiles and memorabilia devoted to the car, motorcycling's past has had short shrift. Bike exhibits usually have been relegated to dark corners of those car museums, or they've been private, out-of-the-way collections not generally open to the public. In short, the two-wheeler's contribution to transportation history has gone unheralded, especially in this country, where attempts to showcase motorcycling's heritage usually have fallen far short of what's deserved. That seems about to change, however, and it's a change that's long overdue.

During Daytona Cycle Week this year, the AMA announced the formation of the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation (AMHF), a new organization with plans to construct and maintain a national motorcycle museum and hall of fame. The site for that 50,000-square-foot national archive will be selected next year, with construction targeted for June 1, 1987. That isn't exactly a hurry-up schedule, but in light of the history of American motorcycling the Foundation will honor, it's right around the corner. Machines like the two-wheel contraption E.J. Pennington lashed together in his Trenton, New Jersey garage back in 1894 have waited a long time for their place in the sun. A few more years doesn't seem unreasonable.

And it's going to take those few years to raise the money needed to launch the project. Although the AMHF is sponsored and partially supported by the AMA, the estimated $1 million required to put the museum in operation will come from funds raised outside the Association. To that end, Lin Kuchler, a former AMA executive, has been named AMHF Director of Resources. His plan is to first find key sponsors, twenty "pillars" of the museum, each contributing $25,000 or more; that would account for half of the money needed. For the remainder, the Foundation will turn directly to the public and to the motorcycle industry. And for all contributors, private and corporate, there are several incentives; for one, all contributions to the AMHF are tax-deductible. Another incentive is the "Founders' Foyer," a permanent display planned for the museum's entryway, with the names of all corporations or individuals donating $1000 or more before January 1, 1986.

Those key contributors are being sought, but the AMHF needs all the help it can get right now. Half of the funding, after all, is expected to come from small, individual donations. Riders willing to help preserve American motorcycling history can make contributions to the AMHF at P.O. Box 141, Westerville, Ohio 43081. Major donators should contact Lin Kuchler directly at 103 Leeward Point, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37075. Motorcyling deserves nothing less.

—Joe Kress

with one of those strips of blacktop designated "the twistiest road in the state," with more curves per mile than any other road in Georgia; and is only two hours riding time from a major urban area (Atlanta). Don't call us for directions, though; contact the Cheeks at T.W.O. Motorcycle Resort, Route 1, Box 1, Suches, Georgia 30572; (404) 747-5151. There, now it's a motorcycling secret you know about, too.

• Jumping from a tiny hamlet in the Southeast up to a giant metropolis in the Northeast, we have an item concerning moto-art. The Kryptonite-4 cycle lock, a slightly downsized version of that U-shaped padlock familiar to most riders, soon will become known to a whole new group of admirers: aficionados of fine art. The Kryptonite has just been selected to become part of the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art, a museum many consider to be the world's finest for art of the Twentieth century. The lock will be exhibited in the museum's Architecture and Design collection. •

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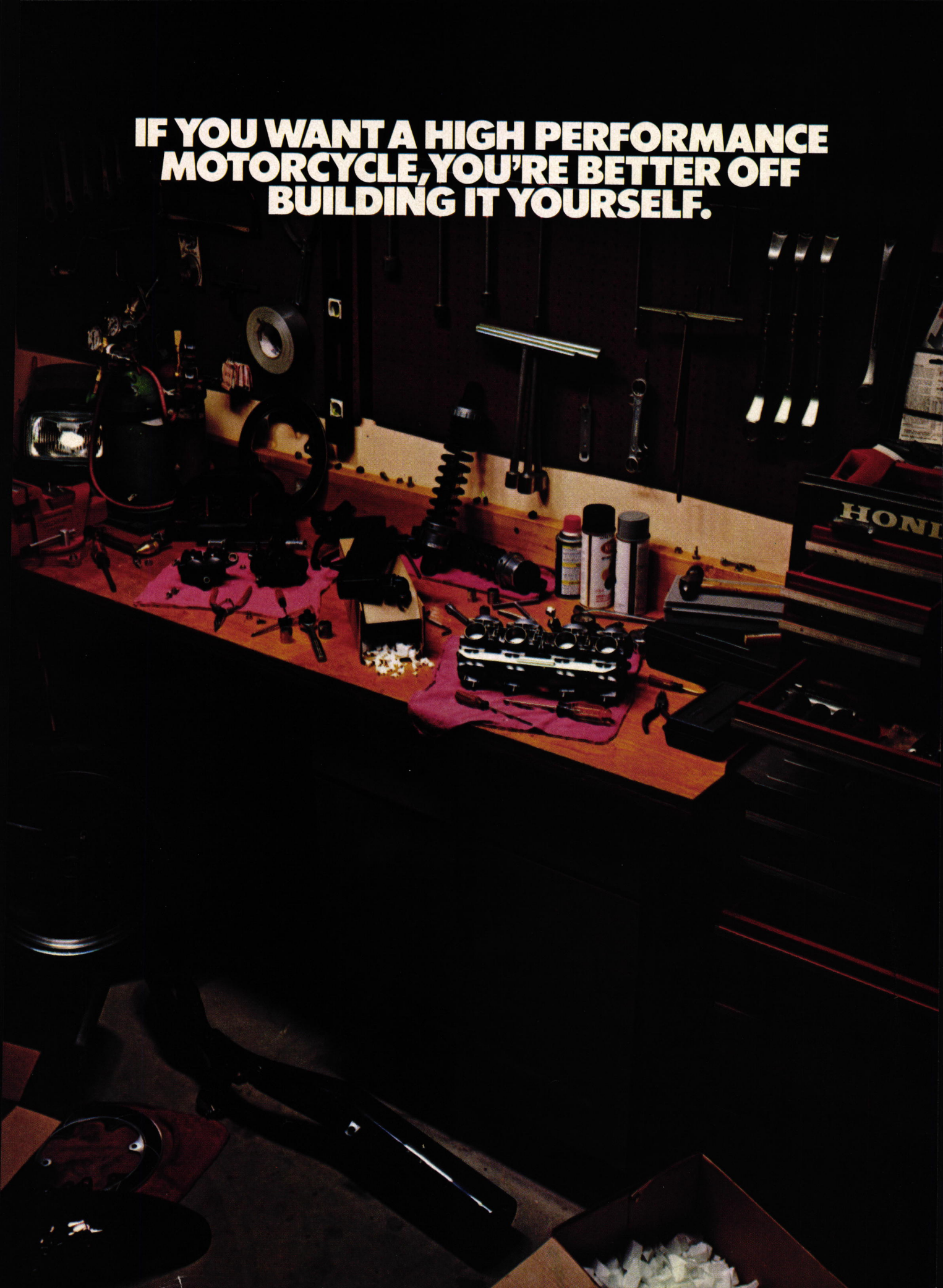

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The Nighthawk S.

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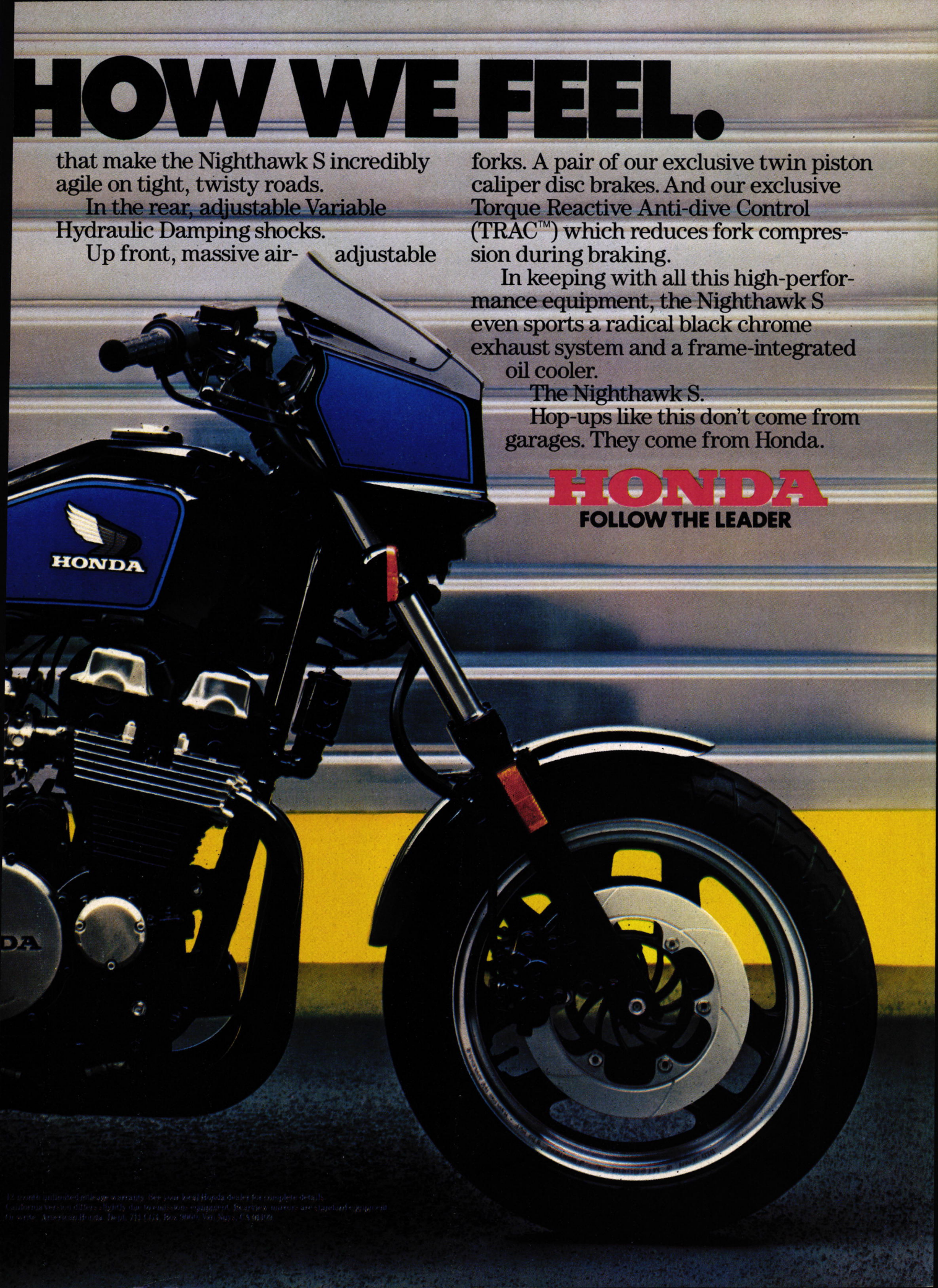

ROAD TEST:

Yamaha FJ1100

Yamaha finally builds the sportbike everyone knew it could.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

"How long?" the Yamaha faithful have pleaded. "How much longer must we wait for a real sportbike, something to challenge the legions of VFs, GPzs and GSs roaming the backroads?" It's a fair question; Yamaha hasn't had a state-of-the-art sportbike for sale in this country for years, and has never had a serious liter-size sporter. The company obviously has the means to produce a stellar high-performance streetbike; 17 individual roadracing world championships should be proof enough of that. Even so, precious little of Yamaha's GP roadracing expertise ever found its way into sportbikes for the American market, and the company's performance image took a dive as a result.

So the corporate decision was made: Build a no-holds-barred, big-bore sportbike, one that can whip all comers; one that, without question, re-establishes Yamaha as a performance leader. And use an air-cooled, transverse inline-four engine for the powerplant; show the world that performance doesn't have to be packaged in a vee-four motor, and doesn't need the complexity of liquid-cooling. In short, build the FJ1100, and show everyone just what Yamaha can do.

Yamaha devotees need wait no longer, then, because the FJ1100 has arrived, and its racetrack breeding clearly shows. This motorcycle, with its 10.992-second/124.48-mph quarter-mile pass at Carlsbad Raceway, is the quickest stocker we've ever tested. And with John Jay Gleason at the throttle, the FJ cranked off a phenomenal 10.681/125.34 run, making it the absolute quickest stock production motorcycle on the face of the earth (see "Speed Wars II: The Sequel," page 20).

Amazingly enough, the FJ's devastating acceleration comes from an engine that's thoroughly unremarkable on the specifications page. Yamaha made full use of existing technology to prove

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1989 VIC HUBER

CYCLE GUARD
YAMAHA
YAMAHA
1100

The manufacturer responsible for 17 GP roadracing world titles had a point to prove: That it could build a fast, competent sportbike. So Yamaha brought its experience to bear, and equipped the FJ1100 with adjustable suspension, radially vented triple-disc brakes, a "perimeter" frame, a 16-valve motor and a gargantuan 150/80 rear tire. The result? One of the best-handling, most comfortable sportbikes around. And the quickest production motorcycle in the world.

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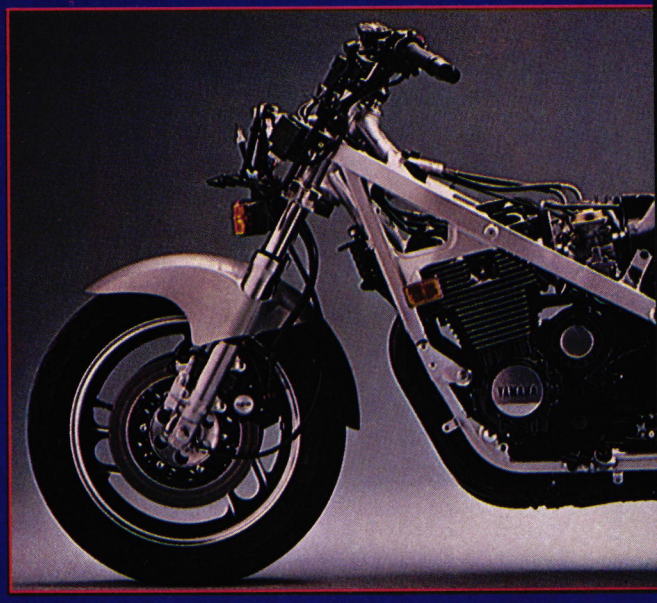

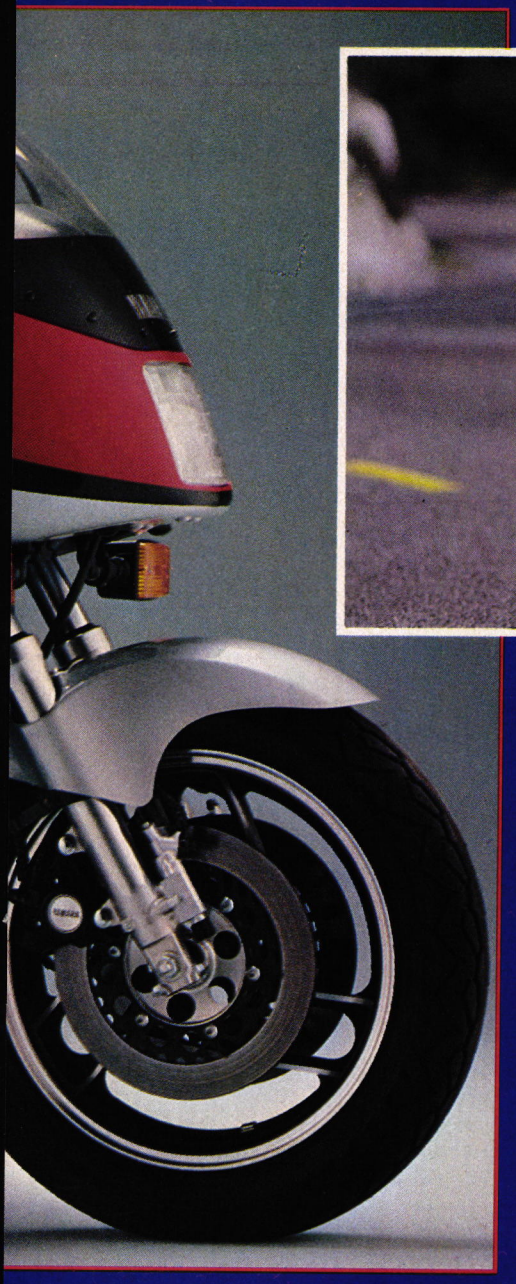

CYCLE
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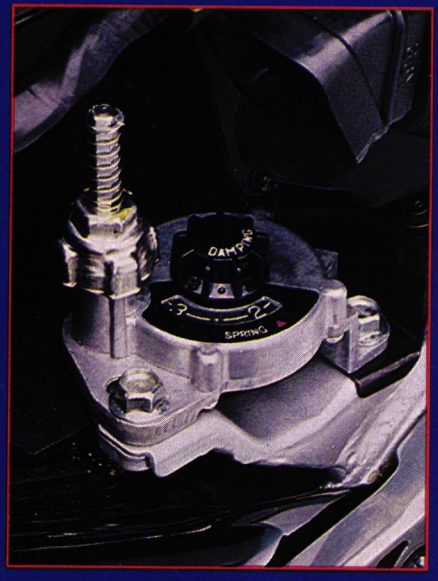
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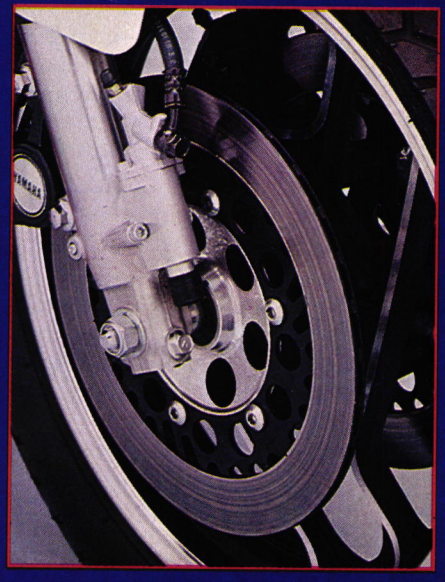
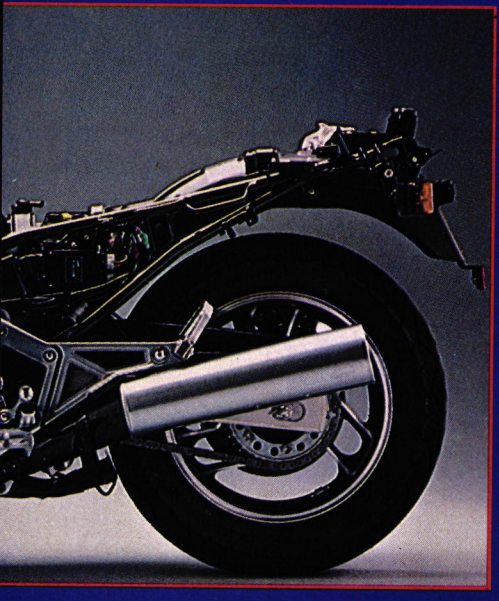
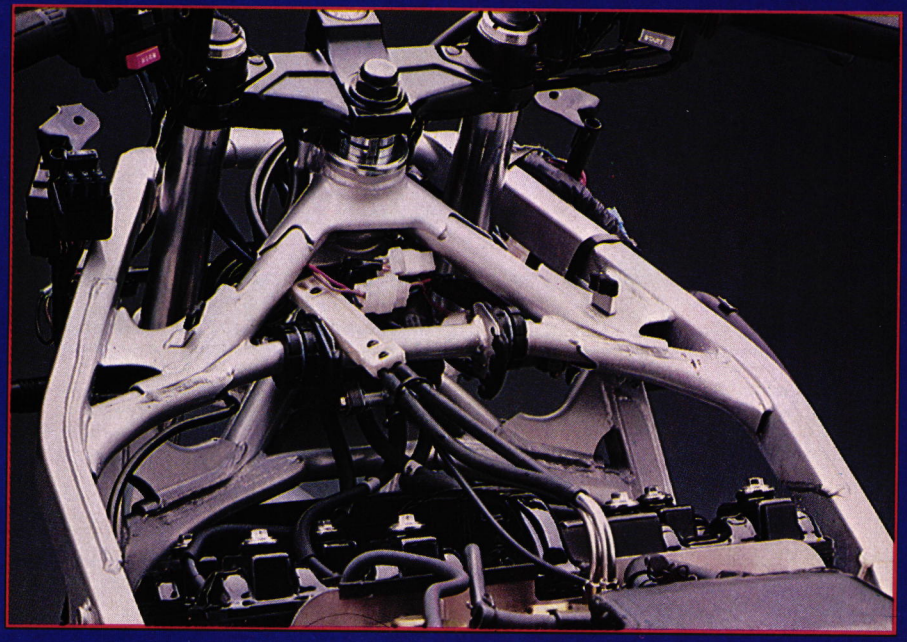


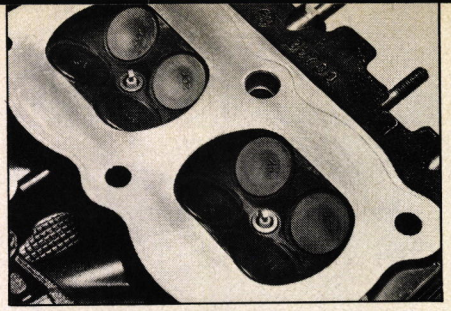




there's still life in the inline-four configuration, so the new 1098cc engine seems utterly conventional. In fact, the FJ's motor follows tradition established by Yamaha's XJ-series engines, with the alternator located on top of the engine cases (to reduce engine width), double overhead cams working through shim-type valve adjusters, and a foursome of constant-vacuum carburetors. Even the 64-degree included valve angle is the same for the XJ and FJ motors.

In a number of areas, though, the big Yamaha bucks XJ tradition. The cams, for instance, open and close four valves per cylinder rather than the XJ-standard two valves per cylinder. Furthermore, the 1100 lacks the YICS (Yamaha Induction Control System) feature, which interconnects all four cylinders' intake ports for improved fuel economy. Yamaha spokesmen say the FJ's development included the YICS setup, but the increased fuel mileage was offset by decreased low-end and midrange power, so the system got deep-sized. The FJ also has an electronic ignition-advance unit, as do the XJs, but the 1100's spark timing is determined both by engine speed and intake vacuum; and a diaphragm clutch spring replaces the coil springs found in XJ clutches. Plus, Yamaha outfitted the 1100 with a dual-rotor oil pump and an oil cooler. One rotor pumps oil through the engine, while the other routes oil to the cooler, but at a slower rate in order to dissipate heat more effectively.

But while the FJ's somewhat dated specifications might pale when stacked up against the glittering credentials of its classmates, its sheer, mind-stretching power renders such comparisons null and void. This is an incredibly fast motorcycle, a point forcibly driven home anytime you roll open the throttle. That motor provides a fine combination of low-end torque, strong midrange and a startling top-end rush. It starts pulling right from basement-level rpm, and revs quickly to the 9500-rpm redline, or past, if you wish. Power builds linearly up to about 6000



Four-valve head augments XJ technology

Think of it as 16 seats of power.

rpm, where the FJ starts to deliver its top-end punch. You can exit corners quickly by using the potent midrange to pull the engine into its best-power zone, and keeping the tach needle between 6000 and 9500 rpm launches the FJ away from turns like a road-bound Exocet missile. Such ferocious power must be used judiciously in the lower gears, though. Dial on too much power on your way out of a turn, and the rear tire breaks loose.

A rider forfeits almost nothing for such stratospheric performance, either. The engine starts easily from cold, requires only a short warm-up period, and is thoroughly docile. And if you want to beam yourself from here to there, just flick your wrist; your right hand controls all the power you'll ever need.

Both your hands and feet will detect some vibration, though, despite Yamaha's attempt to nullify the inline-four's inherent secondary imbalance by mounting the FJ's engine in rubber. The bike is smoothest at 4000 and 8000 rpm, although there's still some vibration present in the grips and pegs. At other engine speeds, the high-frequency, low-amplitude buzzing becomes moderately annoying, but doesn't numb the rider's extremities.

Apart from its vibration, the FJ1100 is supremely comfortable. The broad saddle is luxuriously padded (although it's sloped upward to the rear enough to inhibit rider movement), the rearset pegs offer sufficient legroom for all but the tallest riders, and the forward-leaning riding position doesn't overload wrists and shoulders. The wind-tunnel-designed fairing also contributes to the FJ's high comfort quotient by deflecting most of the wind blast, without causing any noticeable turbulence or buffeting. In fact, the FJ1100 seems almost perfectly appointed for day-long runs.

Aiding that day-long capability is a supple suspension that serves up a superior, touring-bike-quality ride. Both ends of the bike are adjustable for spring preload and rebound damping, and set to full-soft, the FJ's ride quality is extraordinarily good. The fork and Yamaha-built deCarbon shock insulate the rider from paving irregularities, even the small, abrupt stuff that gives some other bikes' suspensions fits. But the front fork smothers really big bumps and dips more completely than the rear shock does.

Adjusting the suspension is another matter, though. In front, preload and rebound damping can be adjusted to three settings, independently or simultaneously, and altering the damping is simple enough, requiring only a flat-blade screwdriver. But the toolkit's skinny screwdriver doesn't offer enough purchase to allow changing both settings at once, and there's no 12mm Allen wrench provided in the toolkit to change spring preload only.

At the rear, an extruded aluminum swingarm works through a linkage similar to that of Yamaha's Venture, and the single shock offers 17 settings each for preload and rebound damping. It takes a 14mm wrench to change preload and damping together, and a separate knob permits altering damping independently. Gaining access to the adjusters, however, requires removing the saddle and right sidecover, and then the preload/damping adjuster still is covered by a spring-loaded hatch.

Inconvenient though it might be to adjust, the suspension provides a wide range of settings that accommodate both the boulevard and the backroads. And for fast canyon riding, we found the FJ worked best for a 150-pound rider when adjusted to No.2 preload/damping in the front and No.4 preload/No.4½ damping

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	10.992/124.48	146	535	121
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	11.181/123.62	146	523	126
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	11.121/123.45	150	536	125
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	11.312/120.80	145	560	120
Yamaha XJ900 Seca-'83	11.949/113.20	128	499	135
Kawasaki KZ1000R-'82	11.849/116.73	134†	505	129

†indicates a calculated top speed

at the rear. At those settings, the bike remains stable and wiggle-free at speed, and yields sufficient cornering clearance to work the tires almost to their edges. The folding footpegs touch down first, and serve as early-warning devices; the next things to ground will be the solidly mounted exhaust pipes. Fast, bumpy roads called for No.3 damping at the fork and full-stiff settings for the shock; and while the bike never loses its composure, it does move up and down on its suspension more in the rear than in the front, making us want a slightly stiffer spring and a touch more compression damping to fine-tune the rear suspension.

The FJ owes its good-handling manners to more than just its competent suspension. Yamaha put its roadracing background to use, and equipped the FJ with a hell-for-strong frame, a 16-inch front wheel (a first for a Yamaha sportbike) and a 16-inch rear wheel. The small-diameter front wheel aids quick steering response, and in conjunction with the 16-inch rear hoop, allows the FJ to have a low, 30-inch seat height, and makes for a low overall center of gravity.

Sixteen-inch wheels are fairly commonplace in GP racing, but the FJ boasts a "perimeter" frame most other sportbikes—and even Kenny Roberts' OW racebikes—can't claim. On the FJ, two huge, widely spaced, rectangular-section steel tubes extend from the swingarm pivot, around the engine and front fork, while two square-section tubes wrap under the engine to join the top tubes. The steering head is securely locked to those tubes by six smaller round-section members and a host of gussets. The design offers excellent service accessibilty; the motor can be stripped down to the base gasket without pulling the engine out of the frame.

Yamaha also claims the arrangement provides enormous rigidity, and thorough floggings through canyon roads gave us no cause to dispute that claim. At speed, the FJ feels superbly secure and stable, and remains unflappable even through bumpy, 120-mph sweepers. Midturn stability is excellent, too; the bike rigorously adheres to whatever line the rider chooses. Considering the bike's fairly soft suspension, the FJ's precision and steadiness are a tribute to the frame's integrity.

Fast backroad riding also reveals the bike's moderately quick steering. Yamaha equipped the FJ with a steep, 27½-degree steering head angle, which, along with the 16-inch front wheel, should provide excellent agility and quick steering. But the FJ also has 112mm of trail, which works to slow down the steering somewhat. Consequently, the bike takes a little muscle to get through fast esses, and isn't as quick to respond as Honda's VF1000F, which has the lightest, quickest steering in the big-bore class. Even so, the FJ steers accurately and has a delightfully neutral feel. The only time the bike doesn't respond willingly to the rider's touch is during combined braking/turning maneuvers; then the FJ strongly resists being held down on its line.

It's advisable, then, to finish braking before heeling the bike over into a turn. The FJ's brakes, though, don't equal the standards set by the rest of the motorcycle. All three radially vented discs are pinched by opposed-piston calipers, and there's plenty of stopping power available; but the brakes feel vague, which makes them difficult to modulate accurately during impending lockup. And the front brake easily overwhelms the hydraulically actuated anti-dive units attached to each fork leg. Yamaha hasn't significantly changed its anti-dive system since its introduction in 1981; it didn't work then, and it doesn't work now. Even at the highest setting, the anti-dive setup fails to significantly reduce or slow dive during hard braking.

But a pair of duff anti-dive units can't diminish the FJ1100's greatness one bit, nor can they undermine Yamaha's achievement. After all, Yamaha had a point to prove with the FJ: That the manufacturer most closely associated with Grand Prix roadracing success could make use of its vast expertise, and build a fast, able sportbike. And not just any sportbike, but a big-bore, in the most visible and prestigious class—and in '84, one of the most competitive classes—in motorcycling.

Yamaha succeeded. This is the landmark motorcycle Yamaha had to build, and only partly because it's the quickest stock production motorcycle around. The FJ is no mere nickel-rocket; its handling is a match for anything in its class, and the bike provides a level of comfort and versatility previously thought unattainable for a 146-mph motorcycle.

The FJ1100 marks Yamaha's successful re-entry into the sportbike market, which is nothing short of incredible for what amounts to a first-time effort, and an engine that spots its competition a substantial amount of technology. In short, the FJ1100 isn't just the best sportbike Yamaha has ever built, it's the best big-bore sportbike available. •

Ride Review

• I guess I don't understand the people at Yamaha. They give us one of the best cruisers ever built, the Venture, and call it a touring bike, and now they give us one of the best touring bikes ever, the FJ1100, and call it a sportbike. This big-bore has all the accoutrements important to me on a tourer: an excellent fairing, an all-day seat, a broad powerband, low seat height and a plush suspension. Give the FJ a set of soft saddlebags and a tankbag and I'd take it anywhere.

So don't tell me about the FJ1100's handling, or the way you can lean it until the horizon is completely out of kilter. Don't mention its 10-second quarter-miles or 146-mph top speed. All that's irrelevant. What's important is the way it can carry me and my gear across a day's worth of two-lane. And whatever you do, don't tell me how fast I'm going. That's irrelevant, too. *—Jim Miller*

• One of the more august moto-mags has pronounced 150-mph performance and ride comfort mutually exclusive. The contention is that a sportbike capable of detaching your retinas with acceleration must also pound your kidneys, strain your wrists and cramp your knees.

I don't really know. See, I've never seen 150 mph on a stock streetbike. But I *have* ridden 144 on the FJ1100, as well as hundreds of miles on it at saner speeds. Something profoundly weird must happen to a bike capable of bridging that six-mph gap. Something that turns a suspension rock-hard, that steals seat padding and twists handlebars into awful shapes. Something that never happened to the FJ. But if all that grief really stems from an extra six mph, I'm glad the FJ is a slowpoke. As it is, it's among the most comfortable bikes I've ever ridden. *—Larry Works*

• I don't know what kind of moto-sorcery the FJ1100 is selling, but I'm buying, whatever it is. I mean, there has to be something supernatural about a bike that looks, feels and, when asked to do so, acts like the polesitter at the Bol d'Or, yet is as docile and civilized around town as your sister's Vespa. Because whether it's pottering along through rush-hour traffic or hammering through the twisties at redline while banked over far enough to scrub the lettering off the sidewalls, the FJ never seems ruffled.

That's why I feel that the FJ1100 is the niftiest thing to hit the literbike class since the GS1100E Suzuki—which was, I might add, my favorite motorcycle. But notice that I used the *past* tense; because while nothing could ever replace the Suzuki in my heart, the Yamaha could replace it in my garage. Anytime. *—Paul Dean*

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Yamaha FJ1100 — street

IMPORTER: Yamaha Motor Corporation USA, 6555 Katella Avenue, Cypress, California 90630

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4999

ENGINE

Type ..... four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement ..... double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke ..... 74.0mm x 63.8mm
Displacement 1097.6cc
Compression ratio 9.5:1
Engine redline ..... 9500 rpm
Carburetion ..... four 36mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Air filter ..... disposable paper element
Lubrication ..... wet sump
Starting system ..... electric only
Ignition ..... transistorized breakerless
Charging system ..... 12-volt; 360-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 14-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive ..... straight-cut gears; 1.750:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Final drive ..... #530 O-ring chain (⅝-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 2.471:1 (42/17) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.857	12.353	5.97
II	2.000	8.647	8.53
III	1.571	6.794	10.85
IV	1.292	5.585	13.20
V	1.115	4.822	15.29

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front ..... Kayaba, 41mm stanchion tube diameter, 3-position adjustable rebound damping, 3-position adjustable spring preload, brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.0 in. (127mm)
Rear ..... single Yamaha shock, 17-position adjustable rebound damping, 12mm spring preload range/4.8 in. (121mm)

BRAKES

Front ..... dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 11.1-in. (281mm) effective disc diameter
Rear ..... double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.6-in. (270mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front ..... 120/80V16-V240 Bridgestone Mag Mopus G517 tubeless
Rear ..... 150/80V16-V240 Bridgestone Mag Mopus G516 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

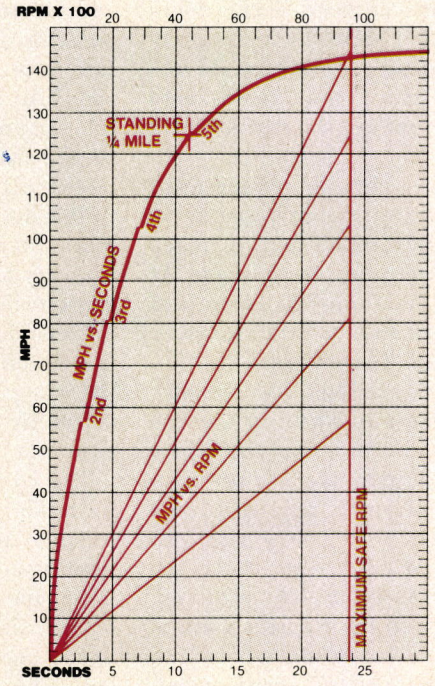
Weight ..... 535 lbs. (242.6kg)
Weight distribution ..... 49.1% front, 50.9% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) ..... 992 lbs. (450kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) ..... 420 lbs. (190kg)
Wheelbase ..... 58.3 to 59.5 in. (1481 to 1512mm)
Seat height ..... 30.0 in. (763mm)
Handlebar width ..... 26.6 in. (675mm)
Footpeg height ..... 12.2 in. (310mm)
Ground clearance ..... 4.7 in. (119mm), at lower cowling
Steering head angle ..... 27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 4.41 in. (112mm)
Frame ..... round- and box-section tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity ..... 4.4 qt. (4.2*l*)
Fuel tank ..... steel, 6.1 gal. (23.0*l*), no reserve
Instrumentation ..... speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, fuel gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range ..... 27 to 46 mpg (11 to 20 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption ..... 34 mpg (14 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum ..... 165 to 281 miles (265 to 452km)
Cruising range, reserve only ..... no reserve capacity
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated ..... 29 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated ..... 51 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration ..... 10.992 sec., 124.48 mph (200 km/h)
Top speed (observed) ..... 146 mph (235 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph ..... 30 ft. (9.1m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph ..... 121 ft. (36.9m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: Quartz Silver with Stormy Red only



All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

KONI
ADJUSTABLE SHOCKS

THE KONI TRIPLE-RATE SPRING

Koni's exclusive triple-rate, chrome silicone wire spring delivers unmatched ride qualities. The initial one-third travel (1) is supple and readily absorbs small bumps. Transition (crossover) into the mid-range spring rate (2) is smooth for moderate loading and aggressive riding. Maximum spring tension (3) compensates for heavy load weights and high-speed G-force compression. Unlike "stacked" multiple springs, the Koni triple rate does not have *flat* rates at any transition point from soft through stiff. The Koni triple-rate spring is the most advanced in the industry.

KONI 7610 ADJUSTABLE SHOCK

PISTON ROD: Centerless ground to within 0.00012" tolerance. Compact (no crack) hard chrome finish prevents corrosion. Seal stiction is near zero. Full length adjustable damping pin actuated by external knob.

BEARING & SEAL: Double-lip seal stops all fluid leakage. Extra long piston rod bearing precision machined from pearlactic iron for rigidity and wear resistance.

PISTON & CYLINDER: Centerless ground iron piston held to within 0.004" clearance which eliminates need for piston ring. Drawn-over-mandrel cylinder, mirror smooth and double thickness. Foam-free Tellus K-15 hydraulic fluid retains constant viscosity.

ADJUSTABLE DAMPING: Four distinct damping variables available, as adjusting pin and orifices revolve with thumb knob selection. Foot-valve (in bottom of cylinder) maintains compression damping with Swedish music wire controlled valves.

KONI...FOR LIFETIME SERVICE

Only Koni offers its exclusive *lifetime warranty.* It's our proof to every customer of Koni's total commitment to excellence. No other shock maker gives you Koni's guarantee.

KONI HIGH PERFORMANCE

Koni 7610 adjustable shocks dominated AMA BOTT (Battle of the Twins) and Grand National racing in 1983—from Daytona to Ascot. Road racers, dirt trackers and the Grand National champion made Koni their choice.

KONI...YOUR FINAL SHOCK PURCHASE

Inside every Koni shock is the leading edge in technology. Outside every Koni 7610 shock is fingertip adjustability. Inside and out, we guarantee the world's finest shocks—Koni. You have our word on it!

Koni 7610-series adjustable shocks. Available at all quality dealerships.

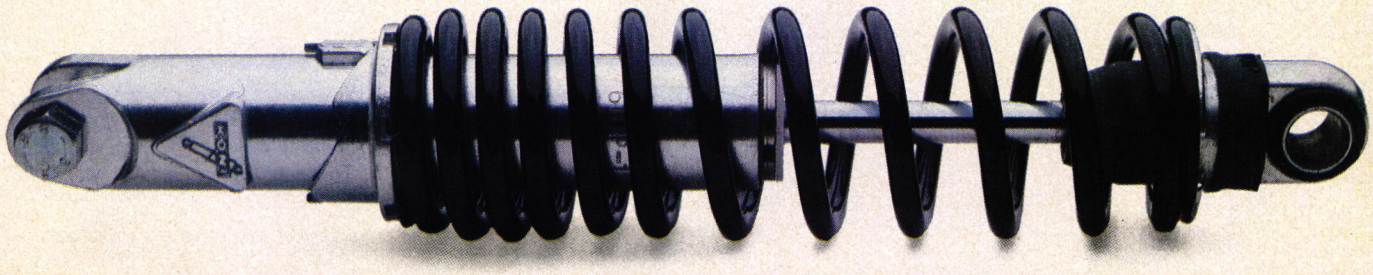
KONI

The Shock Absorber People

KONI AMERICA, Inc.
111 W. Lovers Lane
Culpeper, VA 22701
(703) 825-4543

A Subsidiary of ITT

*Koni warranty information available from your authorized Koni shock absorber dealer. Optional triple-rate spring selection available. Due to length, some 7610-series shocks fitted with double-rate springs. Some 7610F series shocks available without springs for special applications.



GRAND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOCKS

BELL

TRACK TEST:

Honda CR500R

Honda's Open-class power play.

BY RON LAWSON

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

Popular belief has it that Open-class MXers exist for only one reason: horsepower. That they cater to the dark, power-hungry side of a rider, stimulating him with violent bursts of acceleration, then leaving him with little else—aside from a craving for more.

Indeed, most half-liter MXers trade away other assets in the drive to satisfy this dark need. Smaller bikes are lighter, better-suspended, and react more quickly than their power-drugged counterparts in the Open class. When a machine accelerates as hard as today's monstercrossers do, it hits the bumps harder, loses traction more often, and tires the rider more quickly than will a lesser machine.

But one motorcycle didn't quite fit into the Open-class stereotype last year. Honda's CR480R was a big-bore with the congenial personality of a 250. In fact, it had cornering manners that put most of the 250 class to shame. In every respect, the CR480 was an example of a well-behaved motocrosser—and it placed at the top of CYCLE GUIDE's eight-way Open-class shootout last year. But for all the 480's graces, it lacked the one commodity most expected of a big motocrosser: horsepower. Not that the 480 was slow, but of the eight Open-class bikes to visit the dynomometer in last year's shootout, the Honda ranked sixth in horsepower readings.

This year, Honda's Open-class horsepower deficit has been rectified. The CR480R has been replaced by the CR500R, a musclebound brute of a motocrosser, guaranteed to satisfy the desires of even the most hardcore power junkies. At 491cc, the CR500R is the biggest MXer Honda has ever offered, and it stares eye-to-eye with any Open-class dirtbike built.

The notion that bigger is better, though, has long since been disarmed; that much was proven by last year's 480. And since most of the 480's virtues stemmed from its quick steering and feeling of lightness, this year's CR500R begs one question:

Can bigger be as good?

Continued

Tech Inspection:

ENGINE:

While this year marks the most extensive redesign Honda's Open-classer has undergone since the introduction of the CR450R in 1981, the philosophy behind the new CR500R engine isn't dramatically different. The bore (89mm) is the same as for last year's 480, although the displacement was bumped to 491.4cc (from 472.8cc) with a 3mm stroke increase (now 79mm). The CR500R uses the same, no-frills approach to producing power as did the 450 and 480: one unbridged exhaust port, four transfers and an unbridged intake with a top edge that extends high enough to act as a booster transfer port. And the 500 still uses a reed valve in front of that intake, although now there are eight metal petals whereas the CR480R had six. The biggest CR didn't receive Honda's Automatic Torque Amplification Chamber (ATAC), a powerband-broadening device present on the 80, 125 and 250 CRs, because Honda claims the increased displacement supplied the desired power characteristics without resorting to the added complexity and expense of the ATAC system.

That displacement boost created the need for more flywheel inertia, though, to smooth out the CR's power delivery. Honda went to a full-circle crank, which increased crank inertia 12 percent over last year's CR. Actual crank weight is up about 20 percent, although Honda attempted to keep that increase as small as possible by machining away material closest to the center of rotation, where changes in weight have the least affect on inertia. An aluminum plate is used to cover the resultant cavity in each crankhalf to maintain the correct crankcase volume.

Last year's Open-class CR suffered from ignition breakup, and as a result, this year the bike received a new ignition. The advance now is regulated by rpm, whereas last year it was keyed to to the amount of ignition voltage produced at any given time. This, Honda claims, eliminates the trouble.

DRIVETRAIN:

The bottom end of the CR500R is a mirror-image of last year's powerplant. Now, the clutch and kickstart lever are on the right side, while the output shaft

The CR500R's Pro-Link rear suspension system has become less progressive each year

This year the Honda has become a real soft touch for hard racing.

is on the left. This was done to ease kickstarting, but because of the awkward shape of the new kickstart lever, the machine actually is more difficult to start. But there are other benefits to the reversed lower end, such as allowing the brake pedal to be tucked inside the frame rail without interfering with the chain. To handle the additional power of the larger engine, the clutch has heavier springs. Honda also made a switch from steel to aluminum driven plates. The drive plates are fiber, and have a greater asbestos content than did last year's. The extra horsepower also required a stronger connecting rod lower-end bearing; its diameter was increased by 1mm over the 480's. Also, through changes in the primary, final and transmission ratios, the overall gear ratios are more closely spaced.

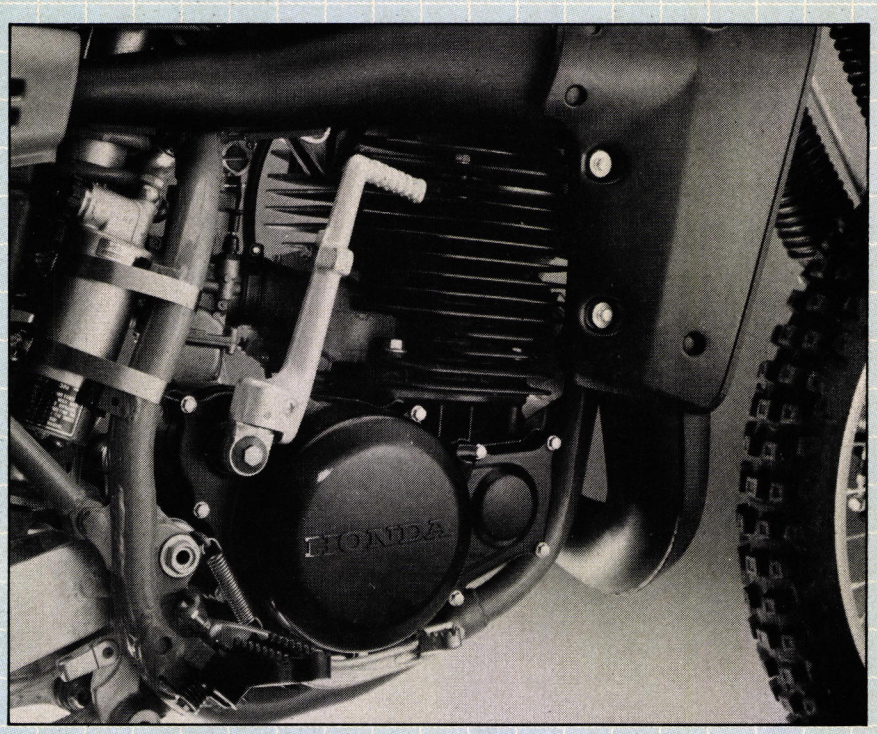
CHASSIS:

Frame: As on the other motocrossers in Honda's line, the CR500R's rear frame section disconnects with the removal of three bolts and two clamps. And like the other CRs, the 500 has a steering head angle that is the steepest in its class—although at 27.2 degrees, it isn't as steep as that of last year's 480 (26.0 degrees).

Wheels: The CR500R is the only motocrosser in Honda's line to use Dunlop K490 tires, front and rear. Those tires are combined with DID rims and straight-pull spokes. The front wheel has a 329mm hydraulically actuated disc brake with a dual-piston caliper, while the rear brake is a single-leading-shoe drum-type. That rear brake is in a new conical hub, which is narrower than last year's, and has the driven sprocket on the opposite side.

Front Suspension: Showa manufactures the 500's fork, which, like those on most other current Japanese motocrossers, has 43mm stanchion tubes and an adjustable blowoff valve that decreases compression damping when the speed of fork compression reaches a predetermined point. That point is adjustable to any one of 14 positions by turning a screw located in the bottom of each fork leg.

Rear Suspension: Honda's introduction of Pro-Link rear suspension in 1981 marked the first use of rising-rate rear suspension on a single-shock motocrosser. But Honda has decreased the amount of progression in the system every year since then, until now the CR's rear wheel rates rise in nearly a linear fashion. Any one of 22 rebound-damping settings can be selected by turning a screw at the base of the shock, although this can be a knuckle-scarring experience due to the limited space around the adjuster. The compression-damping adjuster is on the reservoir and has 17 positions.

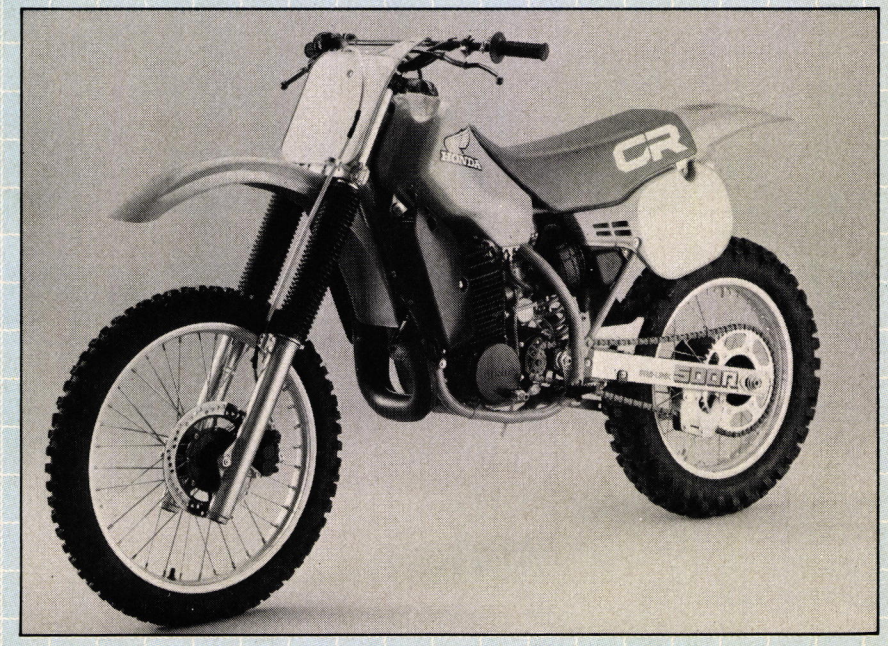


Honda's new Open-classer is completely changed, though little different in concept

All that's really new with this motocrosser is the way it wins.

DETAILS:

Even though the CR500R is air-cooled, it has the appearance of being liquid-cooled, due to large airscoops in front of the engine. Honda claims the scoops are purely functional, and lower the CR's running temperature by as much as 10 degrees Celsius. The engine's switch from right-side to left-side drive created the need for a new fuel tank that could clear the exhaust pipe, which now runs on the right side of the motorcycle. The new tank has a larger capacity than last year's, and is narrower, as well. The airbox also is new and better-sealed, but still uses the same element as the 480.



Continued

Will It Win?

• What made Honda's CR480R the best Open-class motocrosser of 1983 was, ironically, that it was unlike most Open-classers—at least in terms of agility and handling. This year, however, Honda is trying the more conventional, horsepower-intensive Open-class strategy—and the CR500R has more power than any other Honda motocrosser ever sold. Honda riders who blame their bikes for not getting enough holeshots will find the new 500 just blew their story apart. The CR500R will accelerate virtually as quickly as the course's traction and the rider's nerve permit.

If horsepower were the only requisite for winning motocross, though, you'd see a startgate full of turbocharged transverse-fours at most events. But Honda was interested in getting the right kind of power, not just the right quantity. At low rpm, the CR's motor combines track-shaking torque with uncanny smoothness. The rear wheel doesn't jerk in uncontrollable pulsations of low-rpm power, instead rolling on in a linear, manageable fashion that is all the more remarkable considering just how much bottom-end power is being delivered. And if you hold the throttle open and climb into the upper rpm ranges, you'll find a second powerband, one that likely will be most frequented by Expert-level riders. Applying just the right amount of power to the track when the CR in its frantic high-rev mode is difficult, especially in low-traction situations. There's really no need to let the

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Wheel Travel, Front/Rear, in.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight bias, Front Rear, percent	Steering head angle/ Trail, degrees/inches	Transmission, number of speeds
Honda CR500R-'84	12.0/12.5	228	48.5/51.5	27.2/4.25	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	11.3/12.7	227	48.0/52.0	28.5/4.72	4
Husqvarna 500CR-'83	11.8/12.8	240	47.1/52.9	30.0/5.51	4
Kawasaki KX500-'83	11.7/11.9	232	47.8/52.2	29.0/4.80	5
Maico 490 Spider-'83	11.8/12.2	240	47.5/52.5	27.0/4.72	4
Suzuki RM500-'83	11.9/12.8	234	47.4/52.6	29.7/4.84	4

Honda scream, anyway, because when you shift early and keep the revs low, the CR is both controllable and competitive.

Considering how much power the CR500R gained over the 480, in fact, it's remarkable just how manageable the bike can be. But there still are areas where the additional power hurts overall performance, and one such area is cornering. When turning the CR, throttle control is critical: Give it too much gas and the machine becomes hard to hold on course. And if you try to force the CR to turn under too much throttle, you'll discover the front end's tendency to wash-out.

CR500R Replacement Parts

Piston	$42.37
Rings	18.17
Cylinder	176.06
Clutch Drive Plate (7 required)	4.96
Rear Sprocket	38.02
Front Sprocket	14.16
Air Filter	12.20
Front Brake Pad (2 required)	14.38
Rear Brake Shoe (2 required)	7.95
Chain Roller	14.32
Clutch Cable	6.98
Brake Hose	34.65
Throttle Cable	6.84
Clutch Lever	5.25
Front Brake Lever	5.25
Rear Brake Pedal	30.28
Shift Lever	20.20
Shop Manual	18.26
Optional Stiff Shock Spring	52.27

In fact, forcing the CR to do anything against its will isn't a good idea. You'll turn in your best performances if you let the bike do all the hard work and just go along for the ride. Even on the straights, if you become throttle-happy, you might find that the front end breaks into a sudden shake. This has been a Honda trait for several years, but in the past it never was enough to force the rider to roll off the gas. With the 500, though, backing off the throttle occasionally is necessary.

This trait mostly is the result of a lot of power and a steep rake—none of the blame falls on the CR's front suspension. The Showa fork still ranks as the best OEM front suspension in motocross. Like the 480, the 500 has a blowoff valve that reduces compression damping when the fork receives a rapid impact. We generally adjusted the fork so it required very rapid impacts to unseat the valve, but this purely is a matter of personal preference. The fork performed well regardless of the setting.

The same couldn't be said of the rear suspension, though. Riders weighing more than 150 pounds will find the Pro-Link shock undersprung. We tried compensating by adding preload to the shock spring, which made the suspension feel almost regressive: harsh on small bumps but with little resistance to bottoming. The solution was Honda's optional stiff shock spring. After the spring switch, the CR500R's rear end felt much more predictable, although it still was harsh on small bumps compared with last year's CR480R, the best-suspended Open-classer we've tested to date.

One area, however, in which the 500 has an advantage over its predecessor is in stopping. The double-leading-shoe front brake of last year was strong when new, but soon began to fade. That's not the case with the new disc brake. The 500's front brake lasts longer, doesn't fade when wet and is more powerful than any expanding-shoe type brake used in motocross today.

In most other respects, the 480 is a hard act for the 500 to follow. It seems that the 500 pays for its extra muscle with sacrifices in several other categories. But when you consider how much horsepower the Honda gained, and how manageable that power is, the trade-offs seem small, and the Honda still is the class of the big-bores. The only thing that's changed is that now the Honda is beating the other Open-classers on their own power-intensive turf. — *Ron Lawson*

Nits:

- Exhaust pipe burns numberplate.
- Dirt easily falls into carb throat when servicing air filter.

Picks:

- Grips are soft and comfortable.
- Clutch lever has a light pull.
- Numberplates are large.
- Shifting is precise.

Ride Review

• I'm not ashamed to admit it: The CR500 intimidated the hell out of me. In fact, the CR's reputation for wild and woolly, shoulder-separating horsepower preceded the arrival of our test bike, and started scaring me senseless before I ever rode the monster.

That terror lasted right up until my first ride on the Honda. After only a few laps, I realized the CR possesses wonderfully smooth, predictable power delivery—quite confidence-inspiring, really. I found out on the back straight, though, that I was using only the lower one-third of the powerband. And it's the upper two-thirds—of glove-stretching, knob-shredding brute force—that places this Open-classer into the category of religous experiences. Make no mistake about it. This is an incredibly fast, Warp Eight machine. The fact that Honda endowed the CR with such tractability is just icing on the cake.

Without such tractability though, I'd never be able to ride the CR. Realizing that, I'm much less intimidated by the 500 and more respectful of its potential. But until I can race with Magoo I'll be happy to idle through each moto on impulse power, knowing that when I'm ready to go faster, the CR can deliver.

— *Marc Cook*

• You can't see it, and Honda doesn't list it anywhere on the specifications, but I just know there's a turbocharger hidden somewhere on the CR500R.

I can tell that the CR has some sort of abnormal aspiration by the way it runs. Down at low revs, it pulls much like a good turbocharged streetbike does when it's off-boost; the acceleration isn't mind-boggling, but the engine nonetheless pulls tractably, smoothly and, surprisingly enough, competitively. But about the time you start thinking that the CR is a typical low-revving Open-class motocrosser that has run out of beans and needs an upshift, this mysterious "boost" of unknown origin arrives and launches the bike down the track as though some sort of afterburners had kicked in. So even though I haven't yet found the turbocharger, I know it's there.

The drawback to this, for me, at least, is that unless the traction is excellent and there's nothing or no one directly ahead of me, the only thing that top-end rush is good for is getting me into trouble. So I live for long straights when I'm on the 500, since it'll blow past anyone who's not also riding one as if he were tied to a tree. And if he thinks my pass was due to my riding talent, I won't try to change his mind. The turbocharger is my little secret. —*Paul Dean*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Honda CR500R motocross

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Company Inc., 100 West Alondra Boulevard, Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2598

ENGINE

Type ..... two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement ..... one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke ..... 89.0mm x 79.0mm
Displacement 491.5cc
Compression ratio (corrected) 6.7:1
Carburetion ..... one 38mm Keihin slide/needle
Air filter ..... dual-stage washable oiled foam element
Lubrication ..... pre-mixed fuel and oil
Starting system ..... primary kick
Ignition ..... flywheel-magneto CDI
Charging system ..... none

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive ..... straight-cut gears; 2.520:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Final drive ..... #520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 3.643:1 (51/14) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	1.750	16.065	4.68
II	1.388	12.742	5.90
III	1.150	10.557	7.12
IV	0.954	8.758	8.58
V	0.791	7.261	10.35

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front ..... Showa air-spring, 43mm stanchion tube diameter, 17-position adjustable compression-damping blowoff valve/12.0 in. (304mm)
Rear ..... single Showa shock, 12-position adjustable compression damping, 20-position adjustable rebound damping, 15mm spring preload range/12.5 in. (318mm)

BRAKES

Front ..... single-action hydraulic caliper, 9.2-in. (233mm) effective disc diameter
Rear ..... drum, single-leading shoe, straight-pull cable-operated

TIRES

Front ..... 3.00-21 Dunlop Sports K490
Rear ..... 5.10-18 Dunlop Sports K490

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

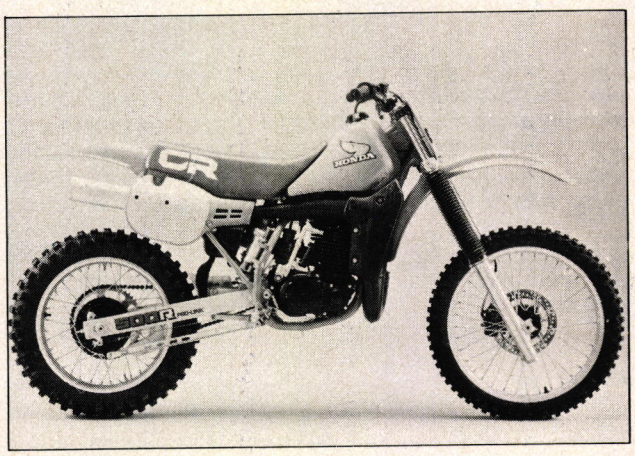
Weight ..... 228 lbs. (103.4kg)
Weight distribution ..... 48.5% front, 51.5% rear
Wheelbase ..... 58.6 to 59.8 in. (1488 to 1520mm)
Seat height ..... 37.4 in. (951mm)
Handlebar width ..... 31.9 in. (810mm)
Footpeg height ..... 16.7 in. (424mm)
Ground clearance ..... 13.2 in. (335mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle ..... 27.2 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 4.25 in. (108mm)
Frame ..... tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
Fuel tank ..... plastic, 3.0 gal. (11.4*l*), no reserve
Instrumentation ..... none

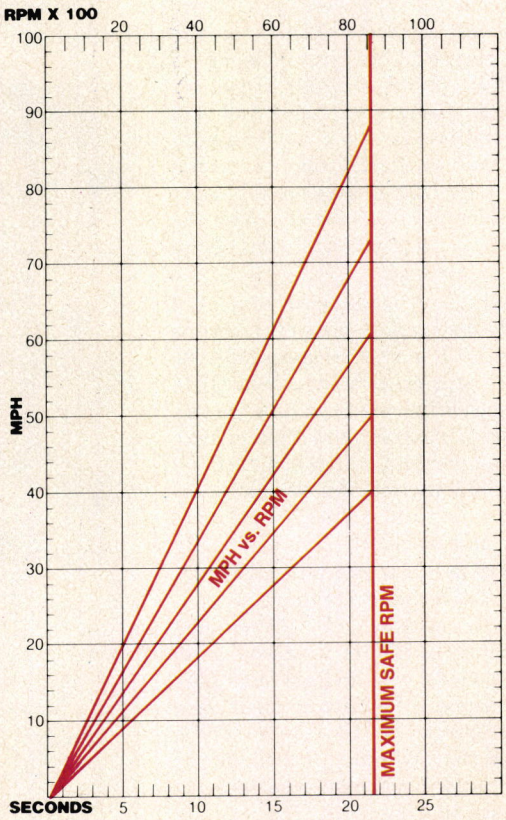
PERFORMANCE

Top speed (observed) ..... 86 mph (138 km/h)

WARRANTY: none

AVAILABLE COLOR: red only





All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

Wind in your hair when you want it, Style, Comfort, Protection when you need it.

The Plexifairing 3 has become America's #1 best selling fairing because it offers the right combination of features to add convenience, comfort and style to your riding experience.

Convenience—Plexifairing 3's Ballsocket™ mounts and Quickset™ hardware make installation simple and easy. The Quickset™ system permits the fairing to be removed or reinstalled in under a minute, so you can have wind protection when you need it and wind in your hair when you want it, without tools. The patented Ballsocket system is bonded to the fairing without drilled holes,eliminating "stress crack" failures, and also acts as a"safety release" in the event of an accident.

Comfort—The Plexifairing 3 provides excellent protection from wind, cold, rain, and bugs. The special shape covers hands, legs and torso without the excessive weight of a frame mount type fairing. And it greatly increases your riding comfort because you no longer have to fight the wind at cruising speeds.

Style—The crisply angular shape of the Plexifairing 3 adds a little styling flair to practically any bike, without spoiling its overall lines. And don't forget you can easily leave your Plexifairing 3 at home whenever you want to do a little "knee dragging" or around town crusing.

National Cycle—50 years of leadership in motorcycle accessories.

1983 Plexifairing 3 applications (tinted screens in italics): Honda-8843/*8853*- V65, VT500C, CB650SC, CB550SC, 8803/*8813*-V45 MAGNA, VT750C, CX650C. 8613/*8623*-all 450's, CM250C. 8693/*8703*-GL1100, GL650. 8783/*8793*-CB750SC. 8863/*8873*-CB1000C. 8903/*8913*-ASCOTS. 8923/*8933*-CB1100F. 8823/*8833*-V45 SABRE. Yamaha—8803/*8813*-XV920, XV750, XS650SK. 8863/*8873*-750 and 650 Maxim, 8533/*8543*-XJ550's, XV500, XS400. 8843/*8853*-XJ400. Suzuki—8613/*8623*-GS1100G, GS850, GS750, GS650, GR650, GS550, GS450, GS300. 8783/*8793*-GS1100E, 8923/*8933*-GS750ED, GS550ED. 8803/*8813*-GN250, GN125. Kawasaki—8613/*8623*-KZ1100, KZ750, KZ650, KZ550, KZ250. 8533/*8543*-KZ550A4, KZ440. 8843/*8853*-KZ750L3. 8923/*8933*-GPZ550. BMW—8613/*8623*-R100, 8863/*8873*-R65, R80ST. Harley Davidson—Plexifairing 1 only-N851A/*N852*-XL, XLS, FX, FXR, FXS, FXRS. Clear-$119.95, Solar Tint-$124.95 (8823-$129.95, *8833*-$134.95). Mail order—add $20.00 for shipping and handling. Send certified check or money order to: National Cycle, P.O. Box 158, 2200 Maywood Dr., Maywood, IL 60153-0158. (312) 343-0400.

COMPARISON TRACK TEST:

Yamaha YZ490 vs. Honda CR500R

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

Power struggle on the Open range.

• When it comes to motocross philosophy, Yamaha and Honda have about as much in common as do the social ideologies of Karl and Zeppo Marx. That's clear just from the way the two companies approach racing: Honda with its victory-at-any-cost works-bike battalion, and Yamaha with its get-more-from-less three-man squad on modified production machines.

You can see further evidence of those divergent lines of philosophy in the new YZ and CR Open-class machinery. The Honda CR500R is a completely new machine, and shares virtually no parts with last year's CR480R, a bike considered to be the best of 1983's big-bore MXers. Contrarily, the latest Yamaha YZ490 seems a little-changed version of last year's YZ. Even so, the bike has developed an overnight reputation as the only Open-classer that stands a chance of outgunning the Honda.

Despite the *appearance* of being a rehashed '83 model, though, there are some significant changes to the YZ490, including

a surprising increase in the bike's already-formidable power output. At the bottom, the Yamaha has plenty of torque, and the YZ revs to a top-end that is unequaled by any production dirtbike. When the YZ is running at its power peak, not even the Honda can keep it in sight. And, in keeping with current Yamaha motocross philosophy, all this extra power was produced by modifying an existing engine design. The four transfers and one booster transfer are unchanged, but the exhaust port now is wider, with a lower top edge than last year's. And the exhaust manifold now is in the exact center of the barrel—it no longer slants to the right. This year the carburetor is 2mm larger, measuring 40mm, and it feeds an eight-petal, rather than six-petal, reed valve. The pipe was redesigned, too, and now runs on the right side of the bike. The sum of those changes is an MXer that has more power than any other we've tested.

At times, though, the YZ's power can be more of a detriment than an advantage—especially in low-traction situations. If you twist the throttle wide-open too suddenly, you're begging for the rear wheel to break loose and slide right off the track. Even when the Yamaha is in the low-rpm part of the powerband, throttle control is difficult because the power delivery is abrupt. At Yamaha's recommendation, we changed the carburetor slide cutaway from a 2.5 to a 3.0, the needle jet from a Q-8 to a Q-4, and the pilot jet from a 50 to a 35. This made the YZ rev much more cleanly, but controlling the Yamaha still demanded attention.

In contrast, the CR500 always runs smoothly off the bottom. It cranks out as much low-end power as the YZ, but does it in a more controllable manner. The CR required no rejetting for riding at low altitudes and in cool temperatures, although the machine did seem far too rich when ridden above 3000 feet. Carburetors on both YZ and CR are finicky, but when both bikes are jetted correctly and have traction, it's a foregone conclusion that the Yamaha will beat the Honda from turn to turn.

How well the Yamaha performs in that next turn depends on several factors. In banked turns, or where there's a berm, the YZ is at its best. You simply set the front wheel in the berm and the YZ tracks as if on autopilot: The bike will follow the berm and point you at the next straight without complaint. The Honda, on the other hand, requires constant correction in the turn—its steep rake and short trail make the machine feel downright hyperactive by Open-class standards. In tight turns, however, those traits work to the CR's advantage. Very little setting-up is required to corner on the 500. Making the Honda dart through a bermless turn might not be as easy as performing the same task on a 250, but in comparison to the YZ490, the CR turns effortlessly. The same problem that has been Yamaha's Open-class stumbling block for years haunts this YZ490, too: The YZ feels heavier than it really is. The Yamaha actually is one pound lighter than the Honda, but if you ride the bikes back to back, you'll swear the YZ is 20 pounds heavier.

In suspension, the YZ again takes a back seat to the CR. Neither bike, however, has perfect stock suspension for hard racing. The Honda's rear shock is undersprung, and both ends of the Yamaha seem harsh, even though the fork bottoms frequently. We addressed the CR's problem by installing the optional stiff shock spring. On the Yamaha, we went to optional stiff fork springs, and adjusted the shock to its lowest compression-damping setting.

After the various adjustments, the CR's rear suspension worked well and the YZ's fork was acceptable, though still slightly harsh. But the YZ's rear end transmitted far too many impacts to the rider. The YZ still felt like it had too much compression damping, and that made the bike kick on small- and medium-size bumps. But further reduction in compression damping would require internal shock modification.

Suspension problems or no, though, the YZ is very stable. Its rear-end harshness rarely is enough to throw the bike off-course, and the Yamaha never exhibits any kind of front-end shake. Regardless of its speed the YZ tracks well, and in fact, it might make a good cross-county racer, limited only by its four-speed transmission and by vibration levels severe even for a 487cc single. Even the four-speed isn't a major drawback, though, because the YZ has enough low-end to handle any tight, rocky sections, while still topping out at 90mph.

But although some 490s undoubtedly will see cross-country races, the YZ is a motocrosser; as such, it has an unusual mixture of convincing assets and damning flaws. The power is an advantage in some situations but a disadvantage in others, and while the YZ's handling can be great, it's only so given the right circumstances. Overall, the YZ ranks as a good MXer, but one that's not as good as the best. And for now, the best still is the Honda. —*Ron Lawson*

YAMAHA YZ490

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corporation USA
6555 Katella Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

Suggested retail price	$2599
Engine type	two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke	87.0mm x 82.0mm
Displacement	487.5cc
Compression ratio (corrected)	6.9:1
Carburetion	one 40mm Mikuni slide/needle
Gearbox	4-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba air-spring, 43mm stanchion tube diameter, compression-damping blowoff valve infinitely variable within 8 turns of adjuster/ 11.3 in. (286mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	single Yamaha shock, 20-position adjustable compression damping, 18-position adjustable rebound damping, 30mm spring preload range/ 12.7 in. (323mm)
Wheelbase	57.8 to 58.9 in. (1469 to 1495mm)
Seat height	37.3 in. (948mm)
Weight	227 lbs. (102.9kg)
Steering head angle	28.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.72 in. (120mm)
Top speed (observed)	90 mph (145 km/h)
Warranty	30 days on engine, frame, rear shock and swingarm only
Available color	yellow only

Yamaha's YZ490 gives the appearance of being a rehashed version of last year's model

But it's the most powerful motocrosser Yamaha—or any company—has yet offered.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 RAY JOHNSON

THE CANADIAN CHRONICLES:

Humility In A Hockey Rink

A look at professional motocross—from the inside clawing to get out.

BY RON LAWSON

"You're an amateur or something?" Donnie Cantaloupi asked incredulously. His inflection was such that he might have been asking, "You're a leper or something?" or "Doesn't having three heads create social problems?"

I really didn't know how to respond. I was an amateur, and Cantaloupi, a veteran of professional motocross, was showing the legitimate concern of a stunt diver who looks down from his tower and sees someone moving his tub of water. After all, the next day we would be racing in the same event, on possibly the world's smallest stadium course. And he hadn't traveled 2000 miles to Edmonton, Canada, to be skewered by the pointy head of some journalist who didn't know which way to go in the first turn.

"Uh huh," I squeaked, offering a glimpse of keen wit. I looked toward one of the race promoters for support. None was there. Until that point, I imagined myself as the George Plimpton of the motocross scene, diving headlong into professional competition and returning to tell the world what it's like to be one of the guys. But the guys didn't see it that way. To them I was just a moving obstacle. Getting around the course meant going over the double-jump, through the table-top turn, across the Tetons and around Bozo the Editor. The plan that was so intriguing in warm, Southern California now seemed a grisly example of ego laying waste to common sense. The only reason the promoters at Brimstone Productions even considered letting an amateur on the track was for the publicity it would generate—and publicity was something the Labatt's Supercross Series needed. The series was, after all, a daring venture. Instead of a one-night stand in a full-size arena, the events would stretch over four nights in two much-smaller hockey stadiums (two in Edmonton's Northlands Stadium and two in the Calgary Saddledome). Instead of

Denton squeezes the fruits of victory

Racing is a tough life.

250s, as used in U.S. Supercrosses, the bikes would be 125s; and instead of 60 top factory stars, each race would have 35 top privateers—and me.

I became more and more concerned about the "and me" as the first event grew nearer. Cantaloupi shrugged his shoulders, returned to his breakfast, and my concern gave way to fear. I left the hotel coffee shop and went to hibernate in my room. By then the ceiling over my bed was becoming a comforting landscape. You see, I had arrived in Edmonton way too early. Southern California Pro racer Vince McMahon, his mechanic Chris Allec and I had left Los Angeles almost a week before the first race, figuring we might need the extra time if road conditions were poor. But after two days of driving, including one stop somewhere near Too Cold, Utah, to fix a flat, we pulled into town. That allowed me four days to map the ceiling in my room and think about The Race. Remember balancing on the end of the high dive for the first time? The height of the board and the hardness of the water increased in direct proportion to the amount of time spent standing at the edge thinking about the upcoming plunge. This was the same. By the time race day came, I swore I saw the dorsal fins of several hungry Great Whites circling in the water below.

Other racers, real racers, have different ways of dealing with pre-race stress. They pretend it doesn't exist ("What, you're nervous?"). Some are better pretenders than others. Gary Denton, for example, preferred sharing his anxiety with selected local girls. While Night One's locals were selected rather hastily, when Denton won the following night, he got to choose from Edmonton's finest. Gary believes in a tough training schedule.

Rick Maki, a crowd-pleaser on or off the track, demonstrated another way of dealing with between-race tension. He and several other racers patronized the local striptease club as a prelude to the third race. Maki sat, griping about the poor quality of the show, and made an ill-conceived comment about showing the dancer—and the audience—a proper peel. Suddenly, he found the other racers tossing Canadian currency his way, urging him to take the stage and perform his own strip. So, in an ugly display of what peer pressure can do to a man, he did.

Back at the hotel, the usual flurry of practical jokes took place. Every night found a bucket of ice water leaned against some hotel-room door, a racer in his jockey shorts locked out of his room in the middle of the night, or perhaps the contagious panic of a phony vice raid. You know, healthy boys-will-be-boys events. All the while I was becoming even more intimate with my ceiling.

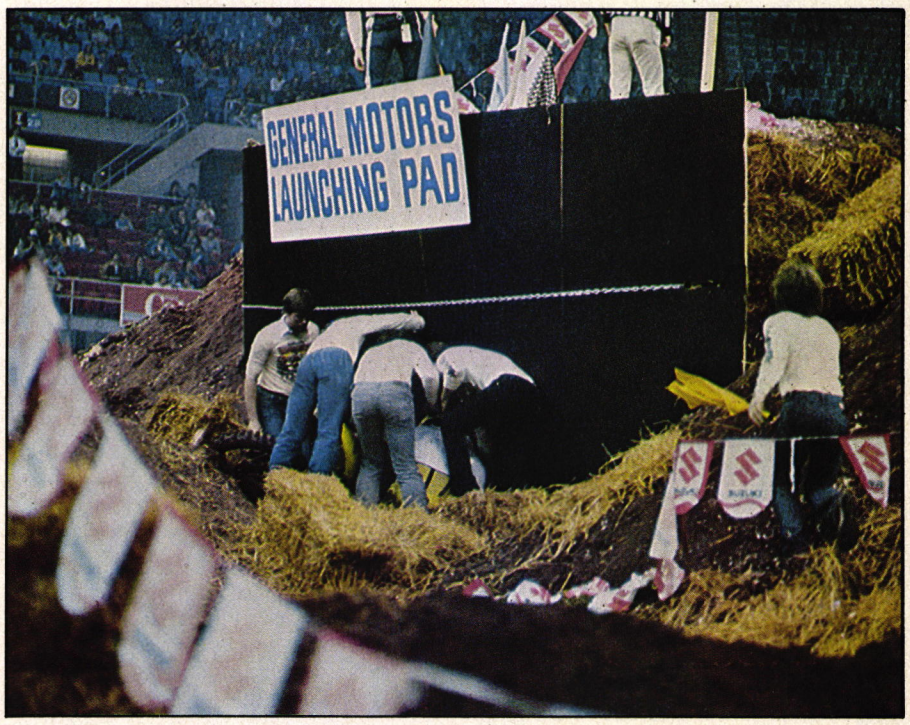
On the night of the first race, though, none of these extracurricular activities had any effect on the reality of racing. They were still fast and I was still the obstacle with three heads. Abject terror had replaced the fear that replaced the concern, and pre-race practice was a morbid spectacle demonstrating why racers are racers and journalists should remain journalists. I crashed in Turn One, in Two, over the double-jumps and over the quad-jumps. I crashed so much that more rubber was worn off my grips than from my tires. And as I limped back to the pits, Cantaloupi played the cruelest hoax of the entire week on me. "You looked awful good out there," he said. What he really meant was, "You looked awful, and that's good because you're too slow even to get in my way."

Announcer Larry "Supermouth" Huffman, standing nearby, got in on the prank: "You don't have anything to worry about; you were doing better than most of the riders on the track," he said. "Most of the riders" turned out to be three guys from New England who hadn't been able to ride in months because the local motocross course was under seven feet of snow. I watched them blunder their way around the track, clearly out of practice compared to the favorites, yet they still looked like motocross gods to me. With Huffman's words ringing in my ears, for a fleeting moment, just for an instant, I began to believe that I might not be the biggest loser since the Seventh Cavalryman who wanted to take a shortcut through the Little Bighorn.

Continued

The smarter riders tend to their spark plug leads before the race

When it comes to Hockeycross preparation, the puck stops here.



A few riders were swallowed by the gulch

General Motors launches another one.

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CYCLE GUIDE test rider Vince McMahon lies down on the job with another Hockeycrosser

Forechecking on two wheels.

Wrong, Moose Breath. Even if I had made it all the way out of the first turn without crashing, I still would have been in last place. But I crashed anyway, just to make sure I was good and last. I hadn't even made it to the gulch, a section immediately after Turn One where the track just disappeared for about 10 feet. I remounted, and rode a yard or so before realizing that I didn't have enough speed to avoid being swallowed by the gulch, so I threw it sideways and flew off the side of the track. When I landed, more or less on the bike, I found myself on a different section of the course, with the leaders of the race coming straight at me. I can't tell you why I wasn't killed on the spot because I didn't see what happened. My eyes were too tightly closed.

The rest of the race didn't get any better, and that meant I had to show up for the quarter-final, sort of a race between losers. This time I went into the first turn actually dicing for the lead. What a moment. Time, unfortunately, doesn't let you savor that kind of moment very long, and coming out of the first turn, I was gang-passed, and almost every rider managed to stick a clutch lever in my rib cage as he went by. I came to the gulch once again, and once again didn't have enough speed to clear it. But this time I hit the brakes and came to a precarious stop at the very edge—just before the only rider who hadn't yet passed me slammed into my rear wheel and launched me into the gap.

By the next night, total resignation replaced terror, fear, concern and any other emotion I once had. At the opening ceremony, we marched onto the field in alphabetical order, and I made my best effort to stand straight for the playing of the American and Canadian national anthems. Mike Larson elbowed me in the hip. "Put your hand over your heart," he said, loudly. I heard several chuckles from the lower levels of the stands, but there was no ego left to bruise. And when, after 10 minutes of trying to kickstart my Kawasaki, Cantaloupi glanced over and suggested I connect my spark plug lead, I didn't even stop to consider what a dope I must have seemed. To everyone, this was an established fact; I simply insisted on providing more evidence.

In qualifying, I lasted three laps before the inevitable crash. As I remounted, Huffman made sure that everyone in the stadium knew I had crashed. "That's CYCLE GUIDE editor Ron Lawson pulling his bike out of the hay bales. Ron's improved a lot since yesterday." Thanks, Larry. The second night climaxed in the quarter-final, when I held second through part of the race, only to crash for the trillionth time. The law of averages caught up with me this time, though, and said that would be my last race for a while. My right knee turned into a cantaloupe-shaped, watermelon-colored affair, and it simply would have no more of this nonsense.

So, after my brief transformation from motojournalist to star motocrosser, I was back to being a journalist again. It must be the fault of some strange wrinkle in the human psyche that thrives on notoriety even if it results in humiliation, but whatever the reason, in the previous week I had had the time of my life.

For the following two races I was just another camera-carrying nobody, walking around on the infield, safely anonymous, making a living off the accomplishments of others. I was a watcher instead of a watchee. So I watched the last two races, and I watched at the farewell party the promoter threw for the racers, and I watched as Denton kissed five Canadian girls and two other racers goodbye. And I watched the road for the 2000-mile trip home. But McMahon, who has a talent for putting things in perspective, did just that as we were passing once again through Too Cold.

"You don't have any reason to be upset," he said, honestly trying to cheer me up. "After all, when you got into this thing no one expected you to do well. So you didn't disappoint anyone." ●

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Brooks T-81 Thinsulate Jacket

Form, meet Function; Function, Form.

• Since year one, the leather jacket has been a basic element in most motorcyclists' riding kits, and for good reason. Leather can take the edge off of windblast, and (save for a few new synthetics) is the standard of abrasion-resistance. But leather is a poor insulator, so the choice for cool-weather riding has come down to piling on layers of clothing under a leather jacket, or wearing a synthetic jacket with one of the new generation of insulators, such as Thinsulate, Hollowfil and Polyslim. The two—leather and modern insulators—just haven't been put together in one jacket.

Until now, that is. Brooks Leather Sportswear's T-81 jacket, part of Brooks' "T"-series of leatherwear, has a torso lined with 3M's Thinsulate microfiber insulation. But while Brooks claims Thinsulate provides almost twice the warmth of other synthetics, or even of down, its application in the T-81 is primarily for wind-resistance.

© 1984 GILBERT LUNA

Brooks' T-81 weds leather and Thinsulate

A marriage not made in heaven.

Leather, though, makes up the first line of defense, and the T-81 uses the same 2¼-2¾-ounce top-grain American cowhide found in other Brooks jackets. After drum-dyeing (black only for the T-81), the leather gets an additional coating of lacquer for a measure of water-resistance and to prevent spotting. All seams are double-stitched with nylon thread, and the windflap-backed front closure and cuffs secure with large plastic Talon locking zippers. An orlon/rayon twill lines the jacket's interior.

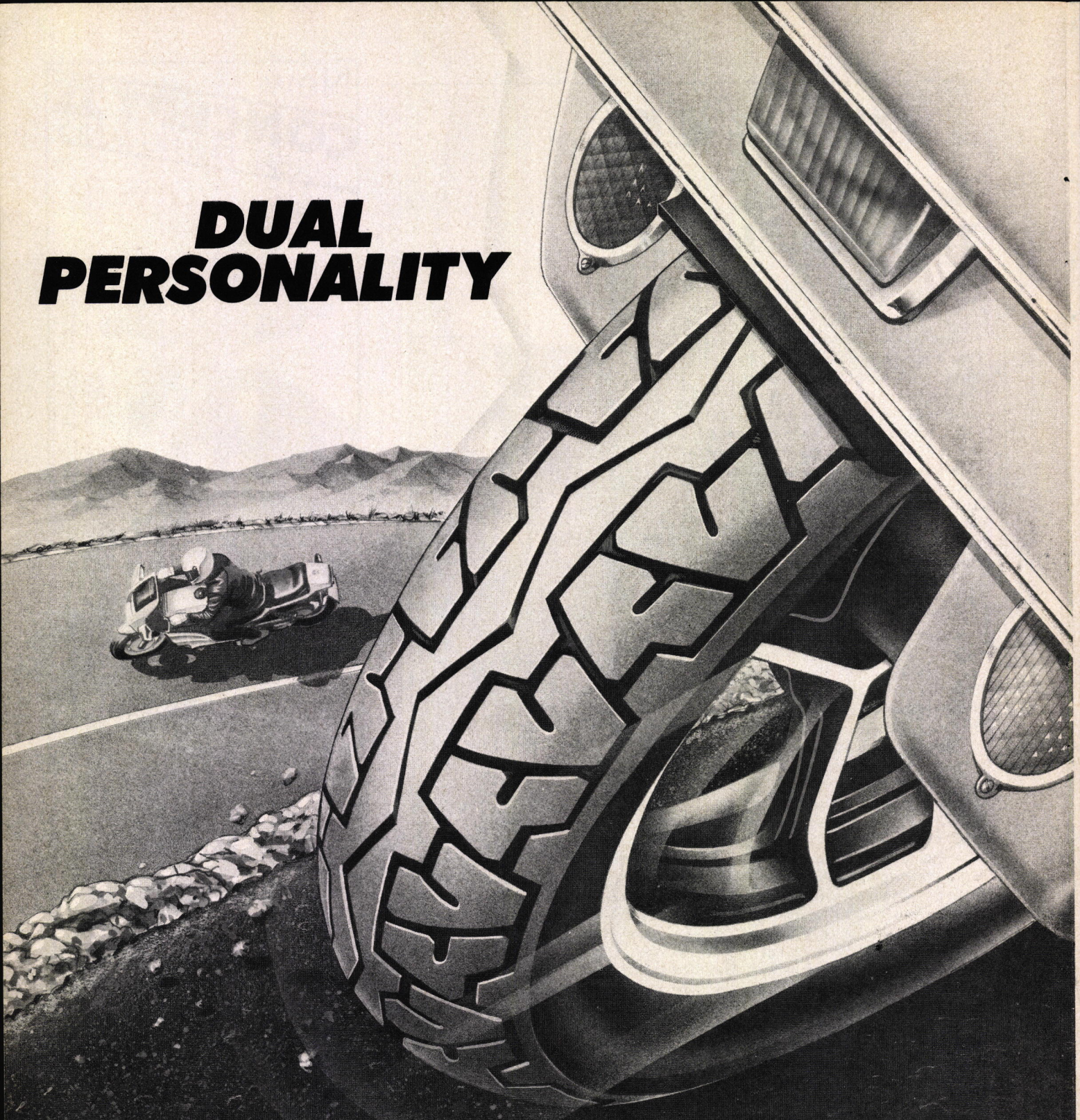
Other features of the T-81 become apparent once you slip it on, things like the action back and the two smallish, zippered slash pockets. Also obvious is the T-81's unusual cut; the jacket fits snugly, and has a short, narrow waist (which extends a couple of inches lower in back than in front) and wide, padded shoulders. Even more noticeable is how comfortably warm the T-81 is on a moderately cool day. But if the temperature rises much over 70 degrees the jacket becomes too hot, and the wearer is liable to perspire even if he's wearing only a T-shirt underneath. A T-shirt is about all you can get on under the T-81, too, because of the close fit.

But it's the T-81's cut that limits its effectiveness to a narrow range of temperatures. In cold-weather riding the jacket provides little warmth, in part because its snap-down dress collar seals poorly. That might be remedied with a turtleneck, but if you're on a bike that demands a crouched riding posture, other garments won't help. Cold air funnels down the front, and the short waist lets air in from the bottom, too, both front and back. Plus, pulling on gauntlet-style gloves bunches up the soft, supple leather sleeves, and the cuffs aren't large enough to allow wearing the gauntlets inside the sleeves. And despite the drafts, in warm weather the Thinsulate lining works only too well, making the jacket almost unbearably hot.

Ultimately, Brooks' T-81 jacket is a sound idea wrapped in poor execution. Certainly, the leather is nicely finished and the jacket has a commendably dressy appearance. A multitude of drafts short-circuits its effectiveness in cold weather, though, while the Thinsulate lining makes the jacket stifling in warm weather. As a result, the T-81's usefulness is limited to a short—and clearly defined—riding season.

Brooks leatherwear is available from motorcycle dealers, with retail prices set by individual dealers. —*Charles Everitt*

DUAL PERSONALITY



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SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

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Roberts Roosts

The others were just spinning their tires.

• It was an ominous sign: Kenny Roberts pulled into the Daytona pits after his first few practice laps for the 200, and wasn't at all happy with his Yamaha. He flipped up his helmet visor and cursed the bike's handling. Tuner Kel Carruthers, Yamaha race director Ken Clark and the Dunlop tire technicians around him just listened. Roberts always blew off steam this way before a race; it had become a ritual with the three-time world champion.

Finally, King Kenny said something that caught people's attention. His Yamaha OW69, powered by an updated version of the 680cc square-four that won the Daytona 200 last year, had been spinning its rear tire on the 32-degree banking. The 175-mph burnout only verified what KR had said earlier, that the tires weren't sticking. "Maybe there's too much power," he said. But the writing was on the wall: The factory bikes had exceeded the adhesion limits of their race tires once again.

Further down pit row, the Michelin men received basically the same word from the Team Honda riders. Traction, they said, was a rare commodity around the 3.87-mile

Continued

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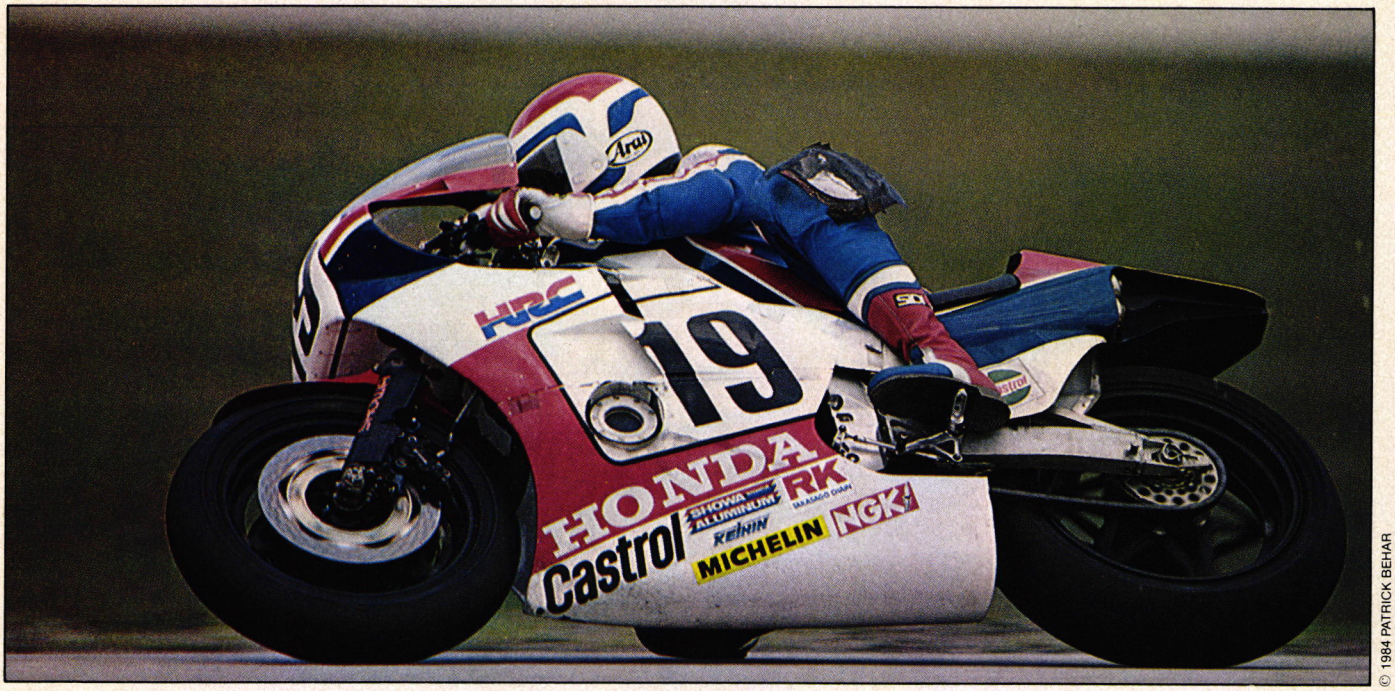

© 1984 PATRICK BEHAR

Honda and Freddie Spencer showed up with the new NSR500 vee-four, and promptly won the pole position

But when it came to the final conflict—the Tire War—Dunlop and Kenny Roberts won.

track. Freddie Spencer, especially, found it hard to keep both wheels going in the same direction on the new NSR500 vee-four. The NSR produced noticeably more power than the three-cylinder NS500s ridden by teammates Ron Haslam and Mike Baldwin. For Spencer, traction was at a premium.

The Tire War was on. But it was more than just a battle between brands. It was a conflict with the racetrack, a struggle shared by both Dunlop- and Michelin-shod bikes. And throughout Daytona's Cycle Week, the two superpowers, Yamaha and Honda, spent more time fine-tuning tires and chassis than they did the engines.

Yamaha riders Eddie Lawson and Tadahiko Taira, both on OW69s, seemed to have the most problems. Taira could manage only a third-row starting position, while Lawson squeezed into the outside of the front row. But Lawson's Yamaha never handled satisfactorily, and he spent Friday and Saturday after qualifying experimenting with new rubber for the race. By race day, Lawson was confident about his tires for the 200. "I don't intend to change tires (during the race)," he said Sunday morning.

And when the start flag dropped, Lawson shot into the lead, and showed the rest of the 80-bike field the way across the start/finish line for the first few laps. Roberts took command on lap four, with Spencer close behind, while Lawson settled into third place. But Lawson's ride lost momentum on lap 17 when he pitted for gas. Dunlop's Peter Engly saw a torn section in Lawson's rear tire, and called for a change. It was the first of two replacements Lawson had to make during the race. The Yamaha rider was the Tire War's first casualty.

Meanwhile, Spencer followed Roberts around the track, darting and weaving

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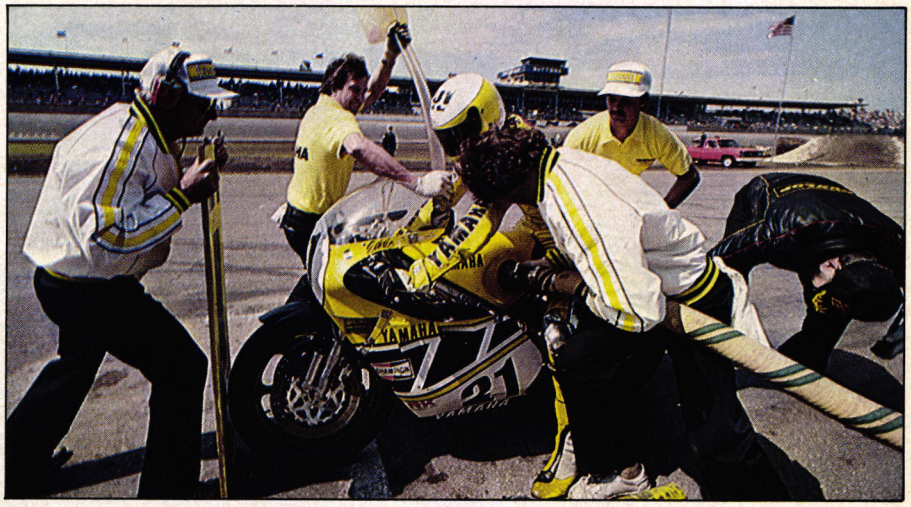

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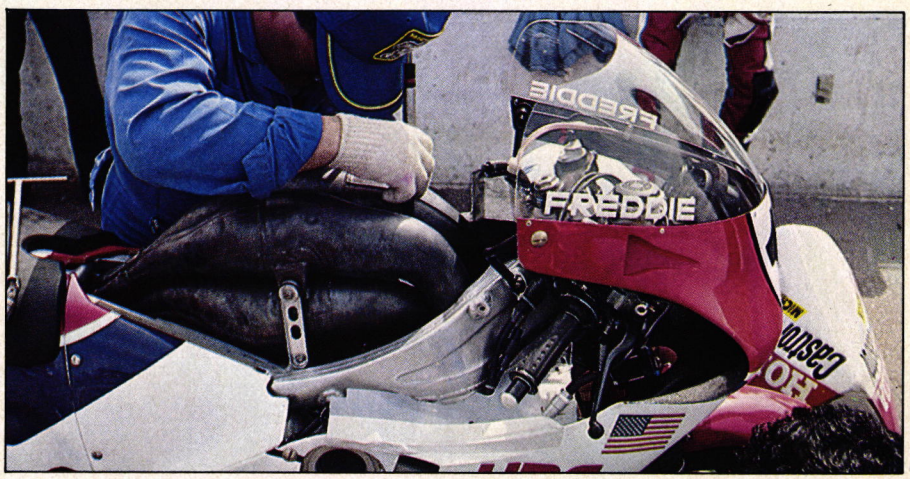
Yamaha's pit stops were flawless; seven seconds was a typical time

But Eddie Lawson's day was spoiled by two unscheduled tire changes.



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The Honda NSR500's "tank" was removed, revealing complex pipe arrangement

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through the field of slower-moving riders like two players of a high-stakes, high-speed video game. A mistake here, though, couldn't be made up on a replay.

On lap 34, while racing single file at 175 miles per hour on the east banking, Roberts signaled to Spencer not to pass him on the left side. Roberts needed the line to pull into the pits for his second, and final, gas stop. As it turned out, Spencer came in, too, and the two of them raced down pit row to their respective pits.

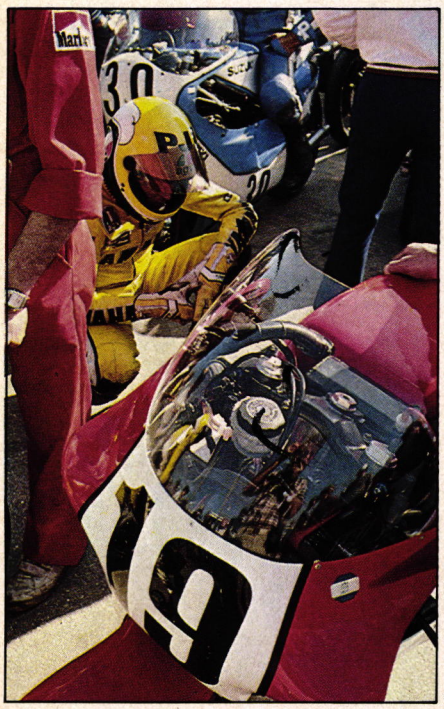
Engly examined Roberts' rear tire, while the Yamaha's five-gallon gas tank was filled. In one sweeping motion, Engly's hands brushed the hot rubber, then motioned forward, indicating that the tire was still good. Then Roberts was gone, in and out in a mere seven seconds.

Spencer was less fortunate, though. The Michelin crew was undecided about the Honda's rear tire, and the delay cost the world champion an additional three seconds, which gave Roberts enough breathing room to break clear for the final 18 laps.

Spencer's bid to catch KR was hampered further by a broken exhaust pipe. The NSR500 lost power, and Roberts coasted to the win with an 83-second margin of victory. With no chance of catching Roberts, Spencer pulled into the pits for a precautionary tire change on lap 47.

And so Roberts went the distance on one set of tires. Although he completely controlled the race, at times it appeared he had lost control of his bike, especially through the chicane. After the race, Roberts confessed, "I bobbled every time out of the chicane."

Despite finishing second, Spencer was pleased with the outcome. He and Honda



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Roberts does some eyeball engineering

But his blueprint for speed was OW69.

Continued

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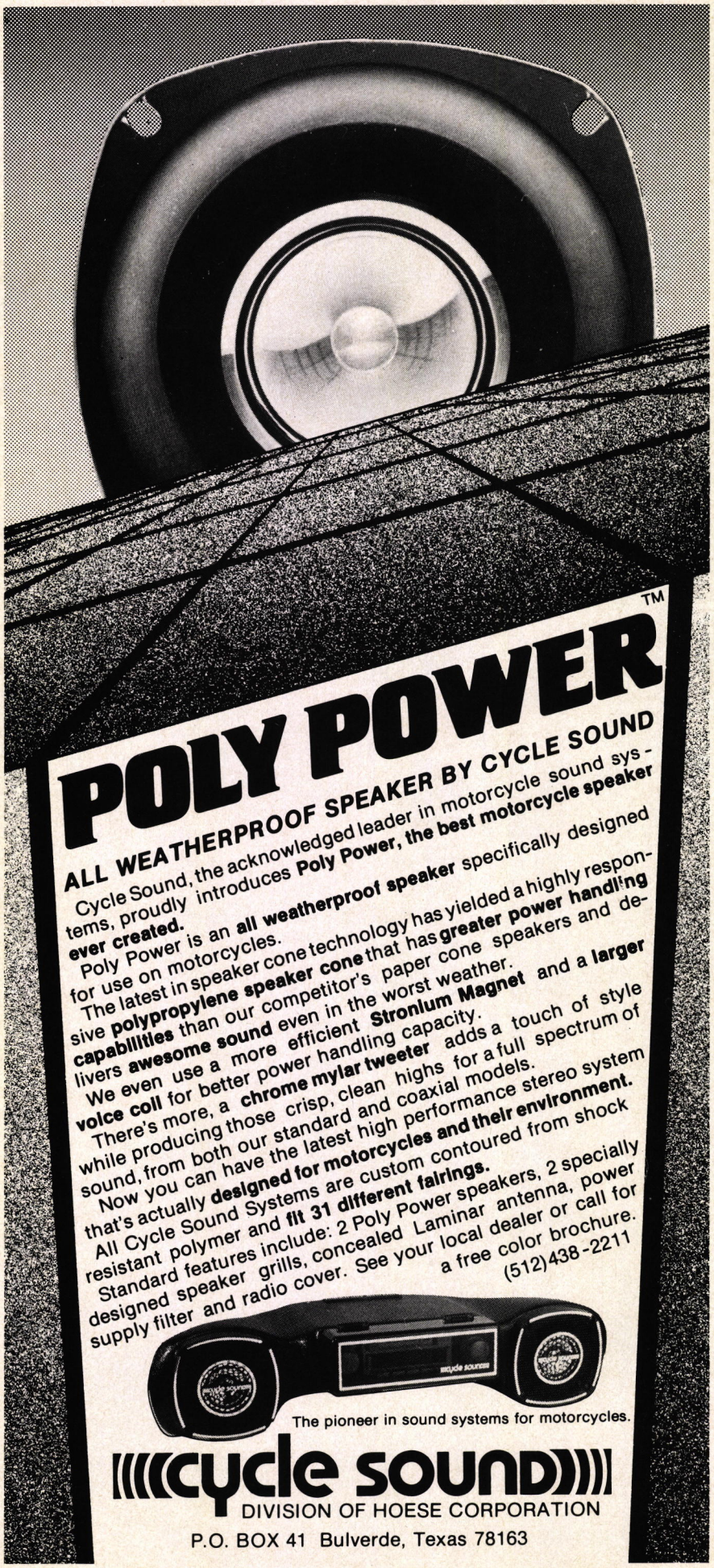
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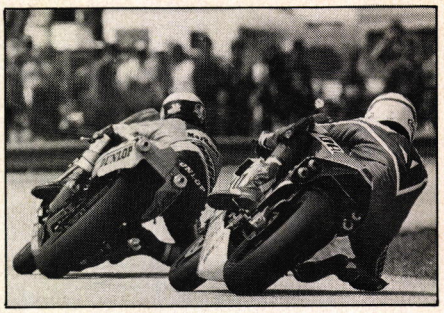

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Spencer shadows Roberts

Fast Freddie's Michelins tired out first.

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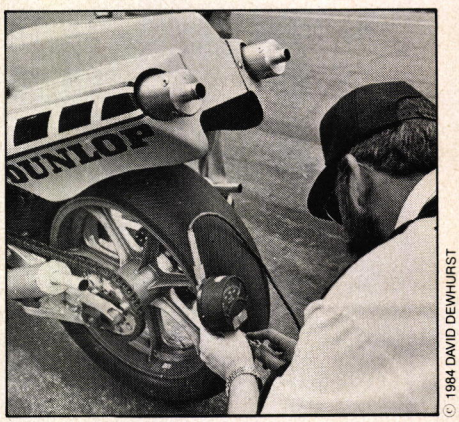
Two tire changes put Lawson in fourth

The Tire War's first casualty.



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Peter Engly checks a tire's temperature

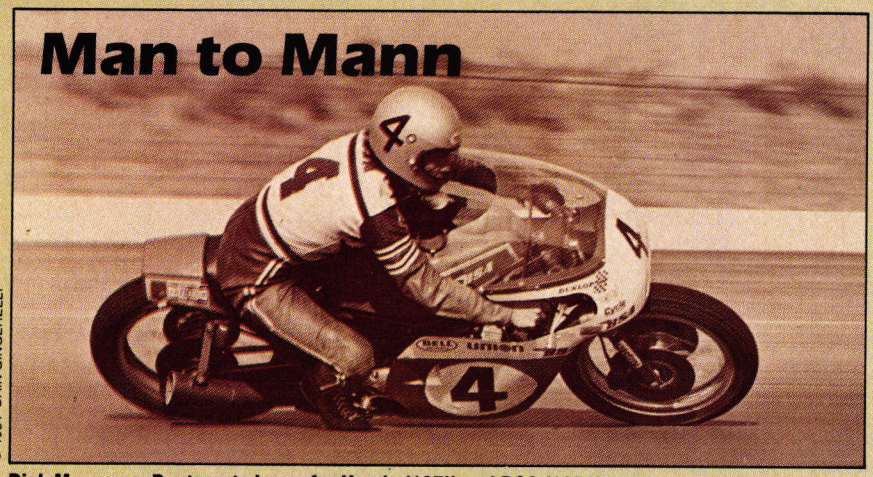
Their signs weren't favorable.

had just put 200 racing miles on a bike that was designed for Grands Prix, which normally are less than 100 miles. It was a good R&D session for the upcoming GP season. Haslam was satisfied, too, with his third-place finish. "I finished early here last year (his bike's engine broke in 1983)," he said. "I'm just glad I lasted this year."

Roberts felt the same. "Anytime you can finish this race, you're a winner," he said after the 200-miler. But Roberts crossed the finish line before the other 43 winners did. And that made all the difference in the outcome of who won the Tire War.

—Dain Gingerelli

Man to Mann



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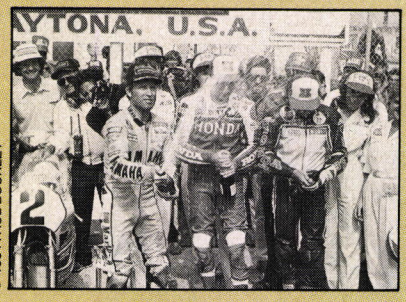
Dick Mann won Daytona twice—for Honda (197)) and BSA (1971)

Roberts celebrates; Reiman (155) returned for Battle of Twins race.



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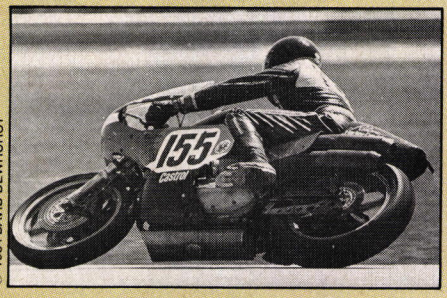

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• When Kenny Roberts won the Daytona 200 last March, he became the second racer ever to win there three times. Roger Reiman was Daytona Speedway's first triple-winner (1961, '64, '65).

Roberts' second-straight 200 win put him in yet another elite group: Only four riders have won back-to-back 200s at the Daytona superspeedway. That list includes Reiman, Cal Rayborn ('68-'69) and Dick Mann ('70-'71).

The comparison between Mann and Roberts goes beyond Daytona, too. Both won two AMA Grand National Championships during their careers (Mann in '63 and '71, and Roberts in '73 and '74). Furthermore, they are the only two racers in AMA history to have won at least one race in each of the five categories that comprise the Grand National Championship, including mile, half-mile, TT steeplechase, shorttrack and roadrace. Roberts leads the all-time AMA roadrace win list with 17; Mann is second, having crossed the finish line first a dozen times.

But beyond the statistics, Mann and Roberts are recognized as riders who always gave 100 percent on the racetrack. And that's a fact no record book can really show. —*Dain Gingerelli*

Continued

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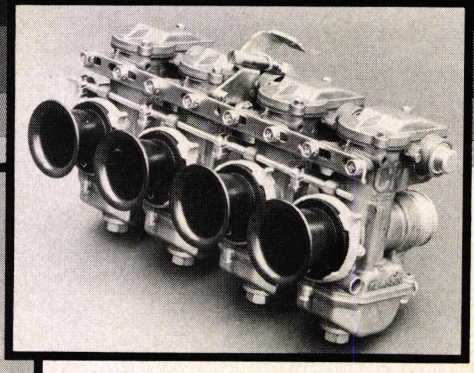

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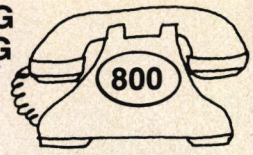

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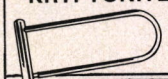

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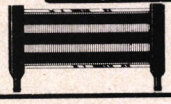

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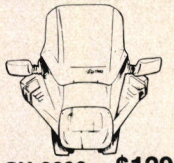

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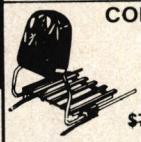

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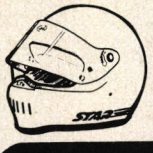

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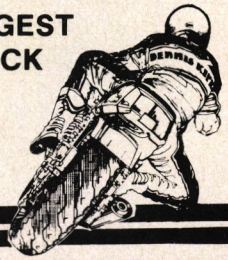

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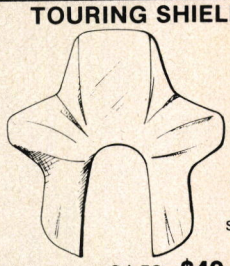

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Streetbikes take on the factory flyers—and lose.

• Kenny Roberts almost didn't win his third Daytona 200 this year. In fact, he almost didn't race. Roberts, who has raced at the superspeedway every year for the past 14, indicated that he originally had planned to sit out the 1984 event. "I didn't want to race Daytona this year," he said after his win, "but Yamaha kept asking me to. Finally, only three weeks ago, I said yes."

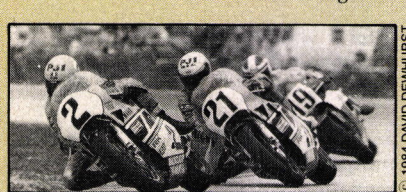
Roberts wasn't enthused about Daytona because, "Nobody (in the AMA) has made up their minds about how they want to run this race." He said the race is too dangerous, because the speed differential between slow and fast bikes has become too great, and the number of slow motorcycles has increased, as well. At this year's race, Roberts figured there were perhaps 15 bikes and riders capable of not being lapped by the leaders before the first pit stop.

And in this year's 200, Roberts, Eddie Lawson and Freddie Spencer started overtaking slower riders by the third go-round. "Lapping people is too crazy," Roberts said. "I almost pulled in on lap five. I don't like it."

Roberts said the problem lies with the Formula 1 rules, which allow converted streetbikes to race on the same track with bikes designed specifically for roadracing (including the Yamaha TZ750 and OW69, and the Honda NSR500 and NS500). The result is an 80-bike field, consisting of a small cluster of top-notch F1 riders followed by a slower-moving pack of field-fillers. "There are people still trying to make streetbikes go around there," he said, "and it doesn't work."

Roberts made it clear that 1984 was his last year racing the Daytona 200: "I don't enjoy it anymore. I want to watch for a while." And so, for 1985, King Kenny will sit on the sidelines as a spectator, while several well-prepared 180-mph racebikes once again sort through a field of 140-mph streetbikes.

—Dain Gingerelli



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Roberts, Lawson and Spencer

Threading through the field.

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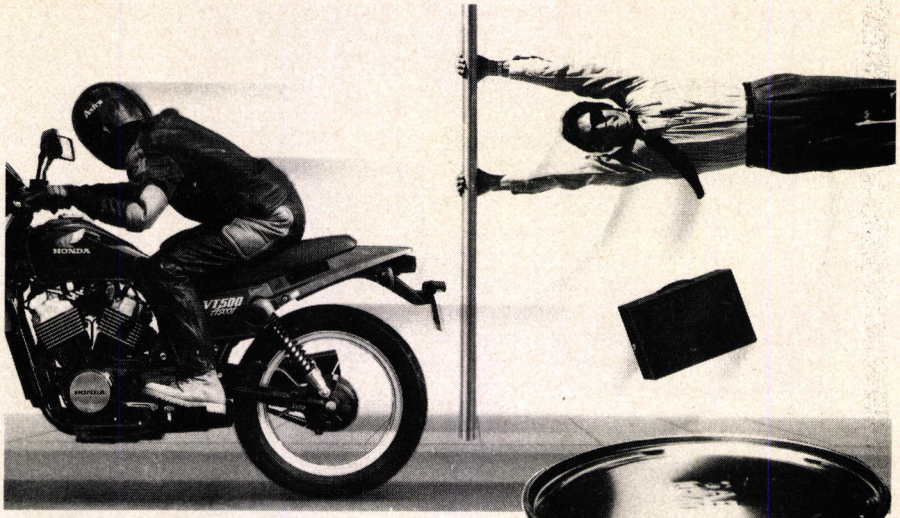

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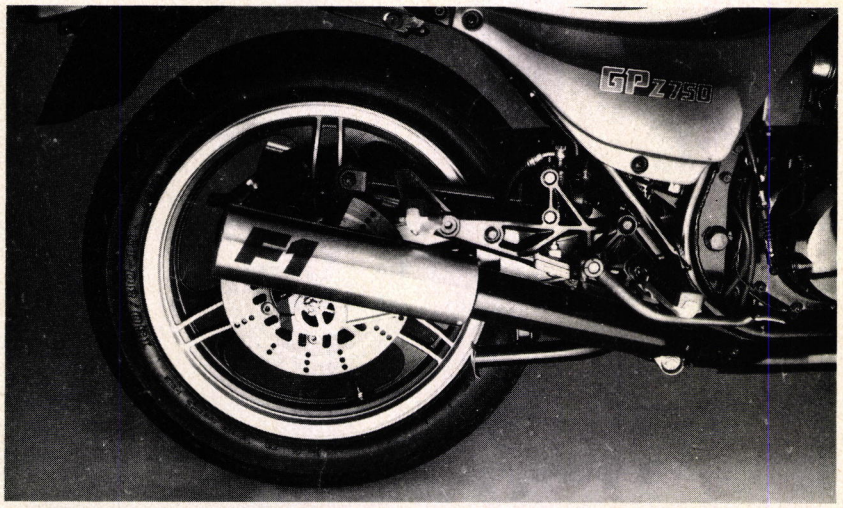

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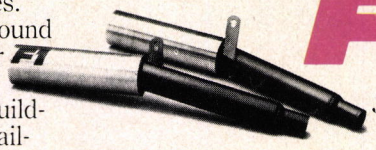

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Pit Bits

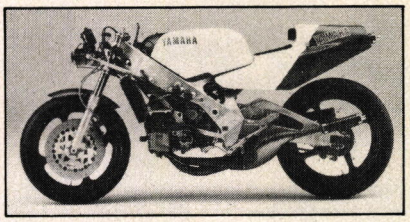
• Honda weight watchers: Sources at Honda confirm the race to the scales is as heated as the race to the checkered flag. The new vee-four NSR500 Freddie Spencer will ride this year in the Grands Prix weighs approximately 264 pounds. That's the same weight Yamaha claims for its renovated vee-four 500.

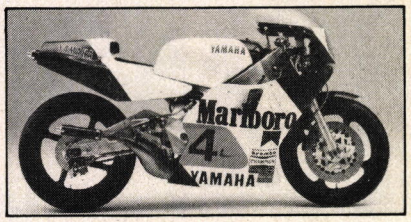
• NS500 trims down: While the NSR had priority at Honda Racing Corporation in Japan, race engineers didn't neglect the three-cylinder NS500 Freddie Spencer used to win the 1983 World Championship. During the off-season, Honda managed to trim almost 10 pounds off the NS by using carbon fiber wherever possible, including the wheels, fork tubes, swingarm and rear-disc rotor. One Honda insider puts the NS500's weight at about 250 pounds.

• Carbon copy: Some of Honda's carbon fiber found its way into the motocross shop, too. Reportedly, Honda has been experimenting with a new carbon-fiber wheel for its works motocross bikes.

• InSport goes international: There's talk that InSport, promoter of Supercross in America, will sanction races in other countries soon. InSport officials say a stadium race in Japan is in the planning stages, possibly for sometime later this year.

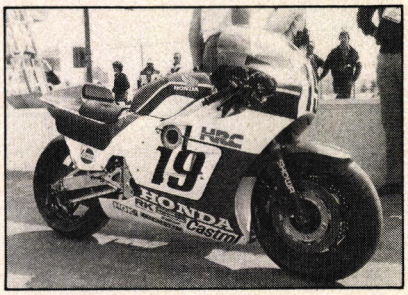
• Interior design: At the Daytona Supercross last March the course was decorated with potted plants. The small trees presented no obstacle to the riders, and were recycled to the nearest nursery shortly after the race. And to think that some people regard stadium motocross as too artificial.





Yamaha's new 500cc vee-four

In battle dress, ready for Lawson.



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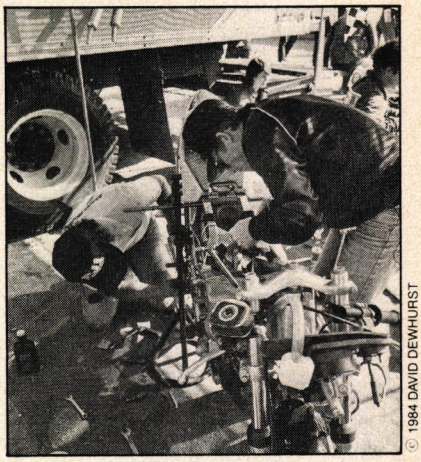
Honda's NSR500 vee-four

About as heavy (light) as the Yamaha.

• Haslam sets Daytona lap record: During qualifying for the Daytona 200, Honda team rider Ron Haslam overshot Turn One, and almost crashed his NS500 in the infield. "I got completely sideways," Haslam said after the incident, "and I had to set her upright. Once I hit the infield grass, there was nothing I could do but ride her out." Haslam went through the infield at about 100 mph, completely bypassing Turns Two through Five. His mechanic later said about the incident, "That must have been the time he turned a 1:33." That's a safe assumption, because Spencer sat on the pole with a 1:59.



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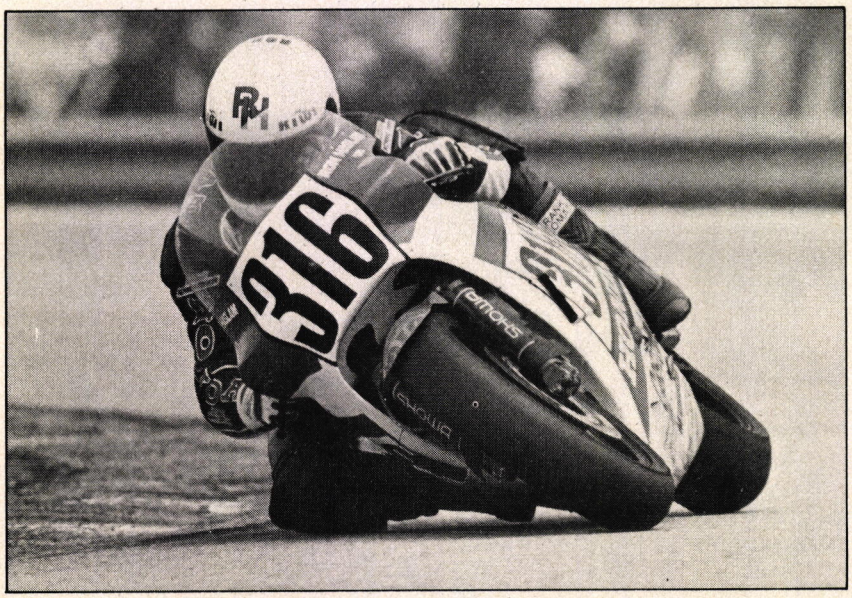
Roberts wrenching for Chuck Aksland

Keeping busy during retirement.

• Honda air-cooled Superbike: Moriwaki Racing of Japan intends to race an inline-four Honda CBX750 in the Japan Superbike series this year. Mamoru Moriwaki, head of the team, says the air-cooled engine has a better power-to-weight ratio than the heavier, liquid-cooled VF750F Interceptor.

• Roberts the wrench: Kenny Roberts is more than just a racer who goes fast on a



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Englishman Ron Haslam rode a steady race to finish third on NS500 vee-three

By cutting Turns One through Five in practice, he turned a 1:33.

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Honda's Bob Hannah at Daytona

Carbon fiber wheels and rubber trees.

motorcycle. King Kenny knows how to build race frames, too. During the off-season, Roberts designed and built an aluminum frame for Chuck Aksland's TZ250J. The project kept Roberts plenty busy during Cycle Week. He spent as much time getting the bugs out of the TZ as he did working on his OW69 Formula-1 bike. The work was worth it, though, Roberts said: Aksland finished eighth in the Formula-2 race, his first-ever Daytona ride.

• The Right Stuff: Grand Prix road-racing is tough on machinery. Consequently, many tuners remove the engine cylinder heads to check the pistons after every practice session. Yamaha tuner Kel Carruthers says it's not uncommon to replace the pistons and rings on the works bikes after every practice session. But some teams—like Heron-Suzuki—can't afford such luxuries. In an interview for England's Motorcycle News, rider Barry Sheene discussed the progress of his Harris-frame Suzuki 500 for the coming season. "I can't do too much," said Sheene in the report, "because we have to save the pistons for South Africa."

• Savings dividend: Sheene's careful attention to his pistons paid off, too. He finished third in the South African GP, behind Raymond Rouche (Honda) and race winner Eddie Lawson (Yamaha). World Champion Freddie Spencer didn't race, because of a foot injury sustained from a crash in practice.

• Roberts' 400: Following his Daytona 200 win, King Kenny went to Italy for the Imola 200, where he rode Eddie Lawson's vee-four 500 Grand Prix bike. Lawson, Yamaha's new No.1 rider, elected to sit out this non-championship race, leaving the bike available for Roberts. KR showed his appreciation by lapping the field, to win his second-consecutive 200-miler since calling it quits. Retirement obviously suits Roberts.

• Broadway Barry: While Sheene was keeping a close eye on his pistons, the race fans at Daytona were keeping their eyes on Sheene. The two-time F1 world champion starred in his own movie, "Space Riders," a film about Grand Prix motorcycle racing. While the acting remained at bottom dead center throughout the picture, the racing footage was worth the price of admission, even though some sequences were repeated two or three times during the 80-minute movie. The climax of the plot came when Sheene's team developed what it called "the secret weapon," a device that coordinated the clutch to the engine's throttle. The "secret weapon" saved 0.3-second in a race, enough to give Sheene his third world championship. Well, that's Hollywood! —*Dain Gingerelli*

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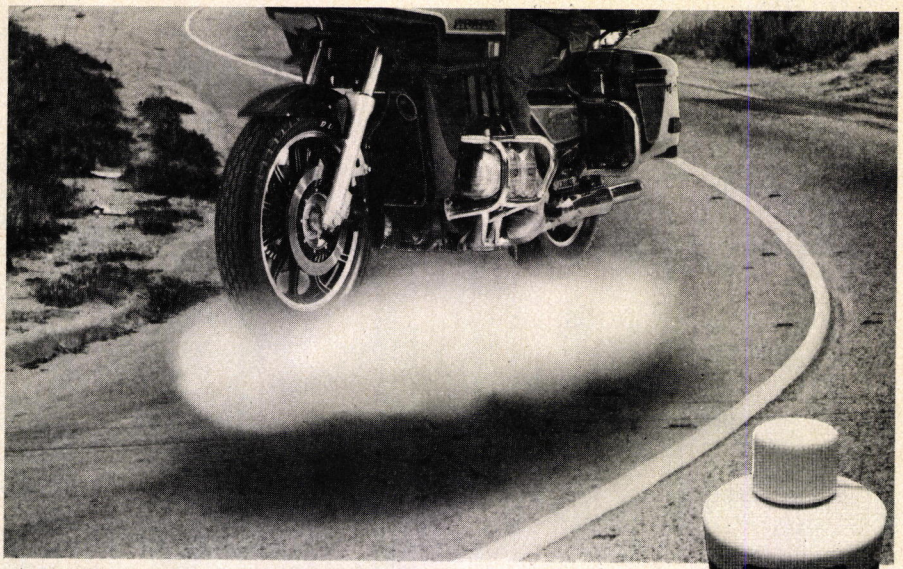

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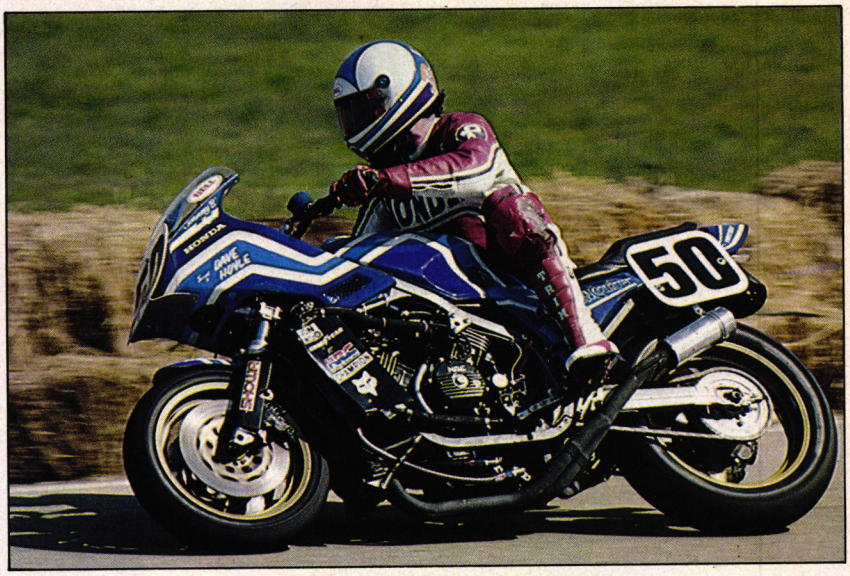
• Everyone loves a parade—except when it happens to be in a race. And that's practically all the Daytona Bell Superbike 100 was this year, too, a parade of Honda Interceptors. Acting as drum major was Freddie Spencer, who won the race for the third straight year.

Few people were surprised by the outcome of this year's Daytona Superbike race, since the only competitive brand, on the factory or privateer levels, appeared to be Honda. It was the only factory actively participating, and the availability of 30 bargain-priced, Honda-built Superbike engines made the Interceptor the logical choice for most privateers. Suzuki had a diluted effort through Yoshimura R&D, and a number of privately entered Kawasakis were present, as well as the Cagiva ridden by Jimmy Adamo. Despite that participation, practically everyone at the superspeedway conceded the race to Honda, even before the green flag fell. And so, the Superbike race became an Interceptor parade, as Honda swept the top three places for the third consecutive year.



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John Bettencourt on the fastest of the colorful Honda Interceptors

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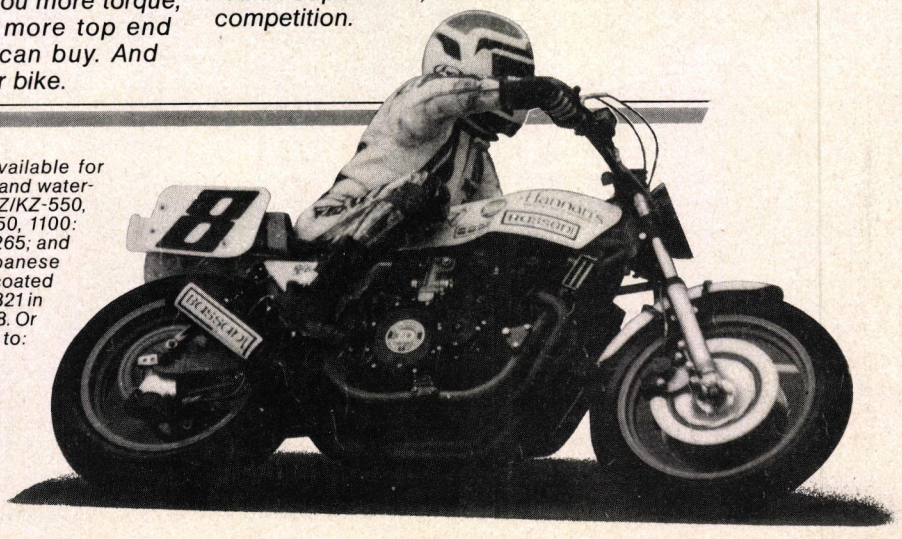

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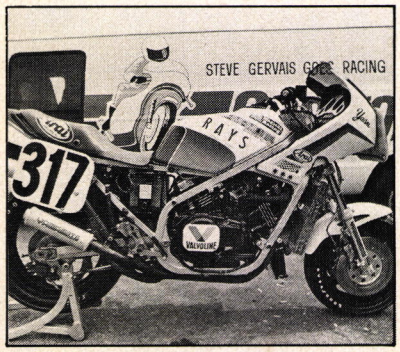
What made this year's race moderately entertaining were the colors of some of the Interceptors. Since Superbike rules allow few bodywork modifications, the only major cosmetic change a competitor can make to his bike is the paint. Although race-winner Spencer and second-place finisher Sam MacDonald rode stock-appearing Interceptors, some wild and interesting custom-painted Interceptors ran in this year's 100-miler. The fastest of these belonged to John Bettencourt, who put his purple-and-white VF750F into third.

Unfortunately, mere paint won't be enough to make the class interesting for 1984. Even Spencer agreed that the Superbike class, which has been a hotbed of factory involvement, needs the support of the manufacturers. "To improve Superbike racing in America," said the world champion, "the class needs the factories back in it."

There is talk, too, of the other three major manufacturers—Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha—returning as early as next season. Kawasaki has hinted that a liquid-cooled, Ninja-based 750cc model will be for sale in this country for 1985, and sources at the factory haven't denied the possibility of a Superbike team to buttress the new model's advertising campaign. Suzuki, too, appears geared for a 1985 Superbike effort, a rumor supported by the fact that several new models, including a liquid-cooled vee-four 750, appear to be waiting in the wings. As for Yamaha, the consistent rumor is that, one way or another, it will have a production-race team next year.

And Spencer, who has put in a flawless 300 miles in Superbike racing at Daytona the past three seasons, says he's ready for the intense competition that comes with wholesale factory involvement. "Bring 'em on," he said shortly after his Daytona win this year. But until the other factories join the show, Fast Freddie will be, as far as Superbike racing goes, the drum major for a Honda parade, nothing more.

—Dain Gingerelli ●



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A VF750F Superbike shows off its colors

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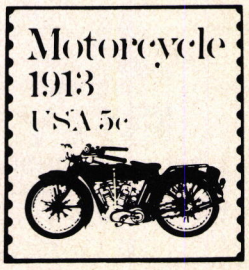

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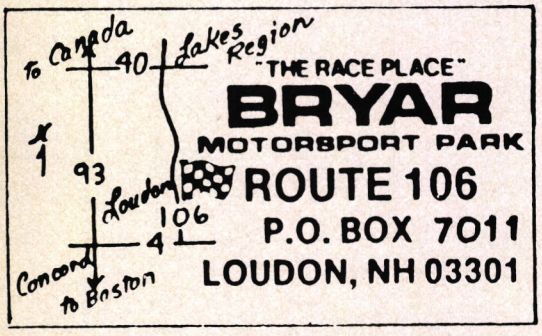

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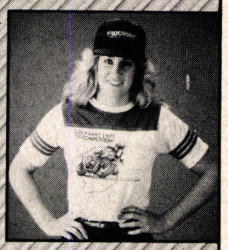

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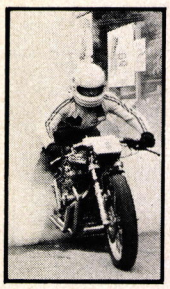

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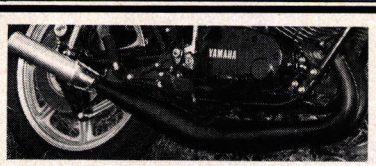

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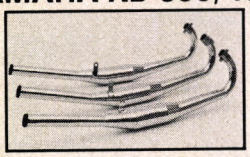

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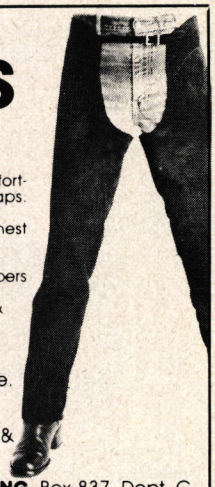

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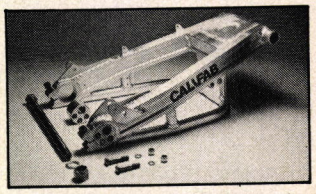

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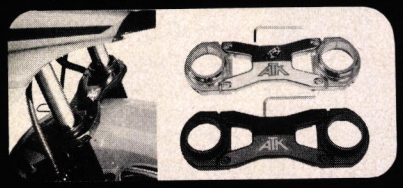

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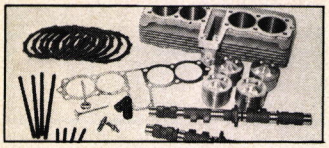

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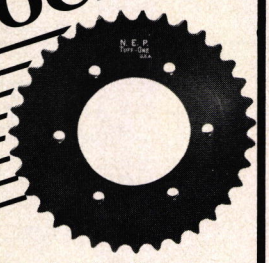

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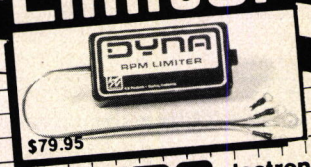

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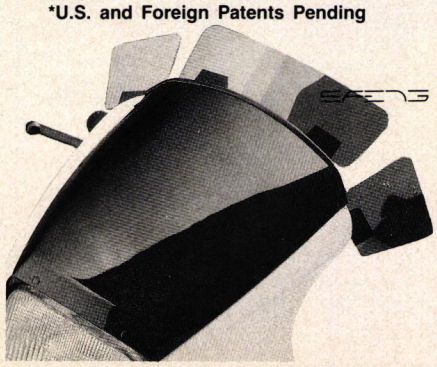

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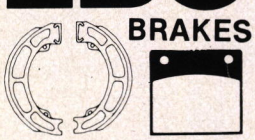

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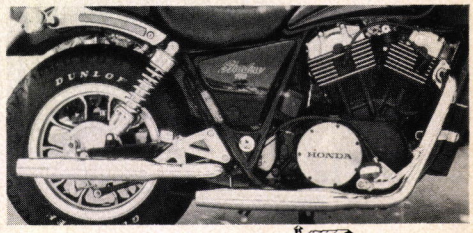

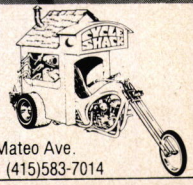

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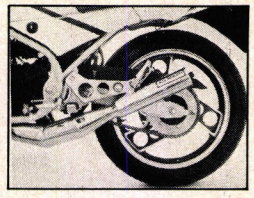
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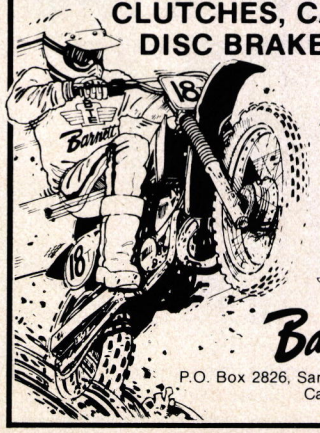
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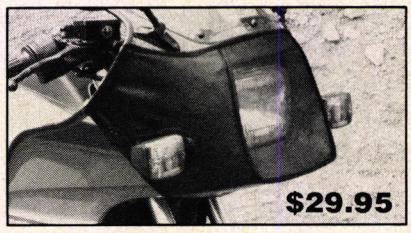
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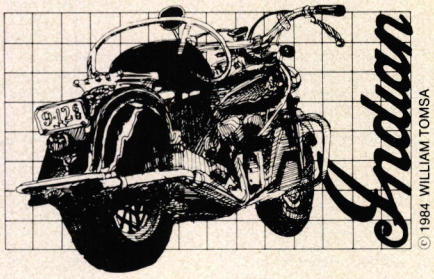
LETTERS *Touring objections, Beemer backlash and H-D outrage.*

A MATTER OF PRIORITIES

In reading your "Big-Rig Shootout" I felt your comments on each bike in each area were acceptable, but the conclusion left me uneasy. To evaluate each machine fairly, I assigned numerical values (four for the best, one for the worst) to each of your conclusions, such as acceleration, handling, engine noise and vibration, and so on. I then added a few areas you didn't cover specifically, like reserve ability and available wattage, which I filled in from the specifications page. The final tally was Honda, 40; Yamaha 39; Kawasaki, 33; and Harley-Davidson, 28.

You can see that the Honda is not the runaway winner you make it out to be, but only by a narrow margin. You downplay the power of the Yamaha, though most riders enjoy performance. You state "all that prevents the Honda from outhandling the Yamaha in virtually every way is that the GL can't be leaned over as far without bashing into the pavement." In my opinion, if it bashes into the pavement, it's not even close to being as good.



I know many GLs roll the pavement out there and Honda has a very much improved model this year, possibly the best. But not by far, and in my opinion after reading this article, not at all.

Michael DeBourbon
Clayton, Indiana

Rate them however you wish, but why don't you try riding them? We did—ed.

ROYALE PAINS

Regarding your "Big-Rig Shootout" (March 1984): I'm just wondering how in the world the Yamaha Venture Royale could have the best acceleration, E.T., trap speed, roll-on performance, gas mileage, handling, braking, etc., and yet "Soichiro Dean" pulls the Honda out of the hat as the winner. He might have sold out to Honda, but I do want to thank him for not altering the test figures to suit his preconceived notions of which won. I hereby sentence him to ride across country on the Aspencade and suffer the exquisite pain that the Honda's "torture seat" can deliver—10 years and Honda still hasn't gotten the seat right, but there was no mention of that in the test. Either you guys "traded off" a lot or never got out of Orange County. I always figure that the machine that sits, goes, stops and handles best would be the winner—not so in Honda Guide.

C. Arnold
Arlington, Virginia

If we'd racked up 2000 miles on a specs page, the Yamaha probably would have won. We didn't; it didn't—ed.

ROYALE GROUSING

In your touring-bike comparison, it looks like the Venture won all the battles (specs and performance) and lost the war (overall winner). I just can't wait

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LETTERS

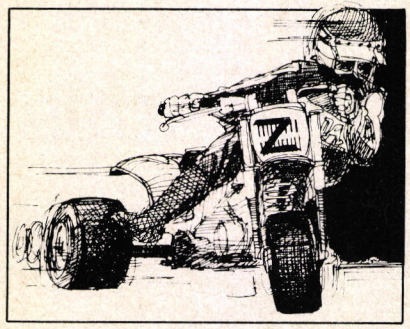
for your superbike shootout, wherein you try to sell us the Honda VF1000F Interceptor over the FJ1100, GS1150E and assorted GPzs. It probably won't make any difference that the FJ1100 will be faster, quicker, have better brakes, gas mileage, better handling, a more comfortable seat—the Honda will still be the winner—right? In addition to the title "Honda Guide," why don't you guys add the slogan, "the best in motorcycling fiction."

Conn A. Lindquist
Washington, D.C.

Sorry Lindquist, we don't print fiction—ed.

HONDA PR

So like a dummy, I subscribe to your Honda PR rag, and what do I get first issue? The "Big-Rig Shootout," where your try to convince us that the bike that was fastest, handled best, stopped in the shortest distance, had the best acceleration (E.T. and trap speed) was second to the Aspencade. I consider the Aspencade as motorized sofa bed, rolling jukebox, and slow-moving chicane for my Yamaha Venture Royale.



© 1984 WILLIAM TOMSA

I took my '83 Royale and a friend took his '84 Aspencade to the Virginia State scales, and with a full tank my bike weighed 751.5 pounds and his Aspencade weighed 788 pounds. My '83 Royale turns 12.5 second quarter-miles, gets 43 mpg around town, 47 mpg on the highway and 36 mpg in the Blue Ridge Mountains. If the '84s are rejetted for lousy performance, I might accept the 12.8 second quarter you guys recorded, but I suspect you guys doctored the Venture's weight and performance figures so the rest of those slugs wouldn't look so bad and you wouldn't jeopardize those checks from Honda.

The Venture is a dresser that thinks it's a sport-tourer. It's really not in the same class as an FLTC Harley, Voyager or Aspencade. It's sort of a BMW or Laverda with decent luggage and a sound system. In the future, I suggest being a bit more objective and a bit less subjective so your tests will have a little more credibility. And please quit touting all those bloody Hondas.

Gunner Gary
Langley, Virginia

None of the numbers on the Venture was changed—including its second-place finish—ed.

SECOND-RATE H-D?

How can you say that the FLT is inferior to the GL1200? Your test even noted that the Milwaukee philosophy is totally different from that of the Japanese. I myself own a belt-drive FLH and like it very much. Trying to sell me and other devoted Harley riders on the GL is like trying to sell Christianity to an orthodox Jew.

Richard Heston, Jr.
Phoenix, Arizona

We'd rather stay out of that one. This is a motorcycle magazine—ed.

CUT-RATE BMW

When I was young, Beemers used to be expensive bikes. But the R100RS tested in your March issue costs at least $1000 less than any of the behemoths featured. That much money would buy a nice set of Krauser luggage, an Eclipse tank bag and enough bungee cords to strangle a horse. Do your figures lie, or am I just getting old?

Au Nguyen
Sea Bright, New Jersey

Sorry, the figures are accurate. Notice a few new wrinkles in the mirror? This morning?—ed.

DELUXE OPINION

I have long held in high regard the test results published in your magazine, believing an unbiased, objective approach was the criteria for all tests and evaluations. After reading Jim Miller's evaluation of the Yamaha Tour Deluxe Package, I am no longer that naive.

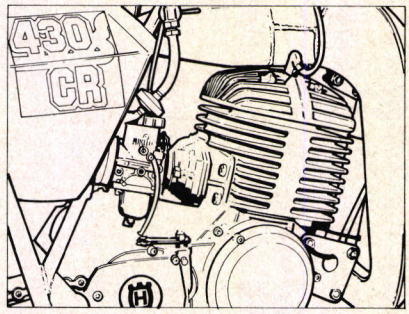
I paid $1391 and installed the package on my XV920J, which now has 14,280 miles on it. In contrast to Miller's opinion, I am totally delighted with the appearance, handling, protection, function and durability of the Tour Deluxe.

The storage capacity sustained us for a two-up, four-day jaunt with ease, and kept everything inside dry. My wife and I were in such a downpour we stopped at the first shelter, leaving our 920 to fend for itself outside. No water in bags or box. I cannot comment on the mirrors, since I kept the stock ones, but the fairing on my bike doesn't rattle.

Regarding his comments on the size of the bags, I have yet to see a cyclist store his helmet in saddlebags. In fact, I cannot recall an ad where the manufacturer shows a helmet stored in saddlebags. What size bags are on Jim Miller's bike? I will admit that the keys are an aggravation, although they are color-coded. But I cycle for enjoyment, and rushing doesn't foster enjoyment, so I have reconciled myself to taking my time and enjoying the trip. The locks themselves, however, I consider to be state of the art—the box and saddlebags are secure, and don't flop around like some I have seen.

I consider myself in Yamaha's corner, but I will let Yamaha know if things are not correct. But in this case, I think Miller is wrong.

Tom Donahue
Ramona, California



BMW BACKLASH

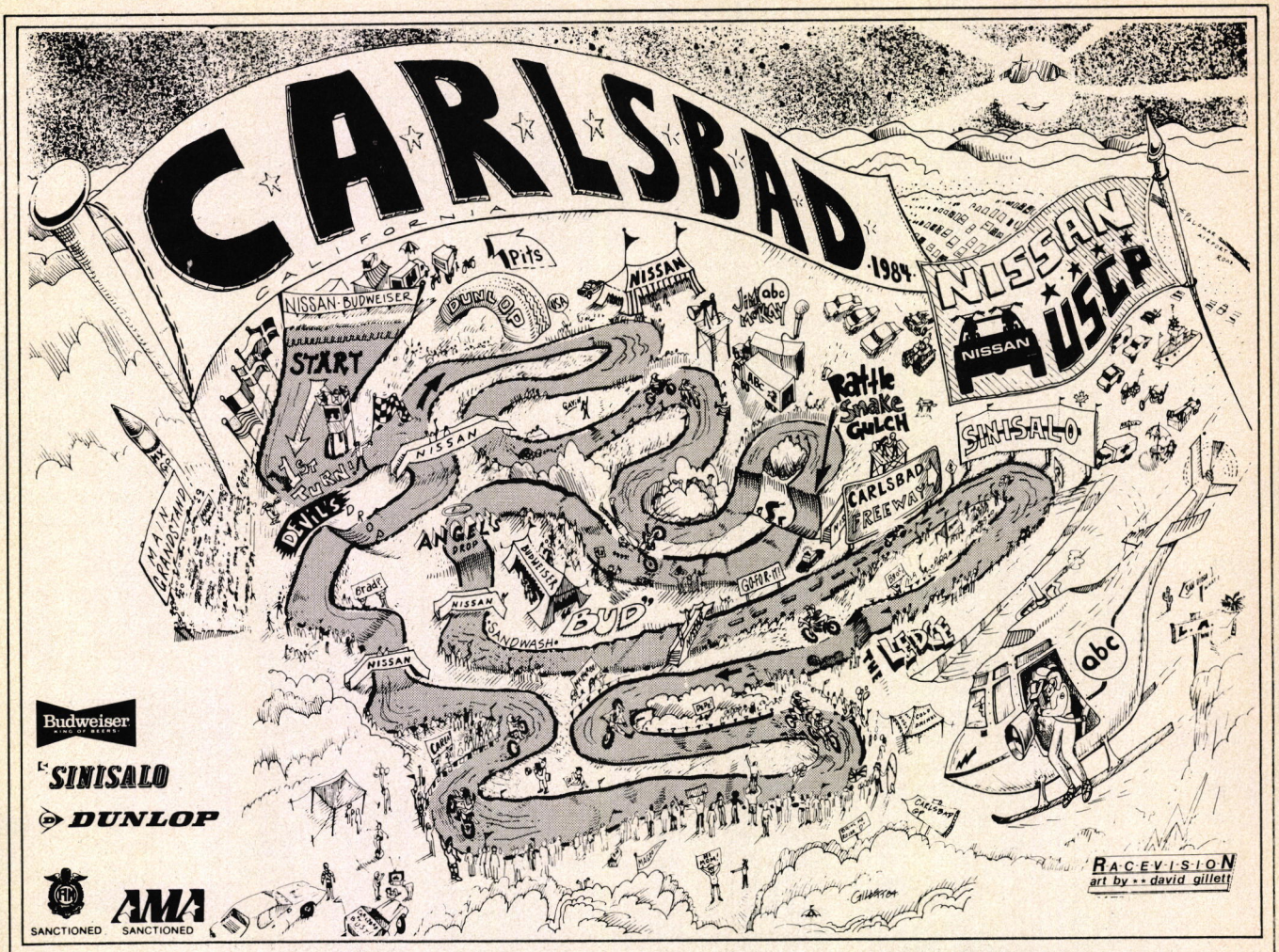
I picked up the March issue of Cycle Guide, and since my local merchant will not allow browsing, I bought it an took it straight home. Lo and behold! The Harley and the BMW tests are stuck in the back of the book. Guess your magazine caters to what sells—i.e., the Japanese Big Four. Next time I'll go to a store that will let me see if the Harley or BMW is in color, or at least get some decent exposure.

Robert W. Cook
Tiffin, Ohio

The Japanese Big Four in the "Big-Rig Shootout?" Honda, Kawasaki, Yamaha and Harley-Davidson, right?—ed. ●

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret that we are unable to give personal responses.

Questions or comments? You can talk with the CYCLE GUIDE staff by calling (213) 328-5700. Phones will be answered Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.



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BEHIND THE LINES

Cycle Guide Editors' True Confessions

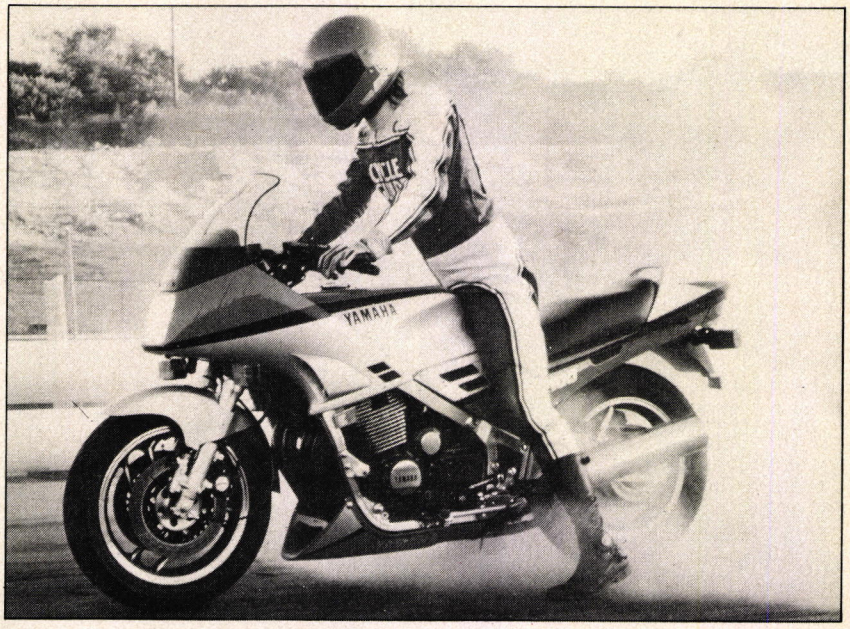
• Every career has occupational hazards. With motojournalism, one of them is "ticketing out"—having your license pulled for excessive citations. Wringing out the last ounce of performance from sportbikes sometimes involves extralegal speeds, and since we are subject to the same penalties as anyone else, we make sure that any such testing is done away from congested areas—and the long arm of the law. There are, however, occasional lapses, particularly when the testing involves sportbikes like the GPzs and Interceptors (May '84).

One of those lapses occurred when Editor Works and I were heading home after work. He was on the 500 Interceptor, while I rode the 750; our speed leveled off somewhere well above 55. After we pulled off the freeway, we were chagrined but not entirely surprised when a CHP cruiser pulled up behind us and an irate voice came over the loudspeaker, commanding us to pull into a nearby gas station.

As I stepped disgustedly off the bike, Works immediately took off his helmet and put on his most congenial manner. He explained to the irate CHP officer that, yes, we knew we were speeding, and, yes, we're really sorry, but we were sort of overtaken by the high-spirited natures of the bikes and couldn't help it. Works went on to note that while we both obviously were speeding, it really wasn't my fault because I was just following his lead. For a moment I started to protest, then wisely shut my mouth—there's no valor in getting a speeding ticket. I listened as Works made a plea for my driving record that would have done Clarence Darrow proud.

We wound up the session with the CHP issuing one ticket (to Works) and one stern warning (to me). The ticket was for substantially less than our actual speed, so lawyer Darrow couldn't have done much better. Unfortunately, Works only bought me a one-day reprieve. I was pulled over the following day, but my best Works/Darrow imitation did me no good; the cop was writing me up before I got my helmet off.

Charles Everitt has little sympathy when other staff members are written up, because he's had more than his share of those pink and yellow slips, including one for 115 mph on the Laverda RGS, a bike that in Everitt's words, "makes you want to go 100 mph, everywhere you go." Everitt probably is the most philosophical about tickets around here, because he understands that his role as the main sportbike tester qualifies as hazardous duty. When Paul Dean was gathering specifications for the VF750F last month, he asked about the bike's top speed. "One-forty," answered Everitt. "I checked it on the way back from paying the Laverda ticket." —*Jim Miller*



Pre-launch preparation for a 10-sec. pass

Except for E.T. a run like any other.

• If there's one yardstick of performance that can make or break a sportbike in the marketplace, it's the quarter-mile. It almost doesn't matter if the bike is pleasing to the eye, comfortable or handles flawlessly; its future often rests squarely on whether it's a rocket—or a snail. And for literbikes, the magic number is the 10-second quarter-mile.

Getting into the 10s, though, isn't as easy as it might sound, especially at Carlsbad Raceway, where traction is a now-you-see-it, now-you-don't affair. Sure, John Jay Gleason can rip off 10s all day long, but me? I'm just a mortal. I'd come close the month before with Kawasaki's Ninja and Honda's VF1000F, but close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades.

So there I was, this month, staring down Carlsbad's dimly lit strip, hoping to get the Yamaha FJ1100 I was on into the magic 10s. Not that things looked particularly promising; my last runs on the FJ had been consistent: low-11s. Once again, close, but no cigar. It was getting late, but I managed to wheedle two more runs anyway.

And I'd really like to report that a 10-second quarter-mile is almost a religious experience, that breaking into the 10s is like battering your way through some impenetrable barrier, where the warp and woof of reality's fabric gets twisted out of shape like something from "2001—A Space Odyssey."

I'd like to—but I can't. Yes, my next-to-last pass was in the 10s—10.994, to be exact—but it felt no different from the string of 11s I'd been turning. There were no bells, no whistles, no flashing lights, no nothing. And on top of that, no one told me what I'd run when I got back to the starting line. They wanted to make sure my first 10-second pass was no fluke. So I made one last run, a 10.992, and still there was no physical indication of what I'd done.

After it was all over, though, and Carlsbad's lights had gone out and we were loading up to go, I was pleased. After all, I'd become a member of "Team 10," as Gleason put it; me, a mortal. And maybe—just maybe—someday I can be a member of Team 9. —*Charles Everitt*

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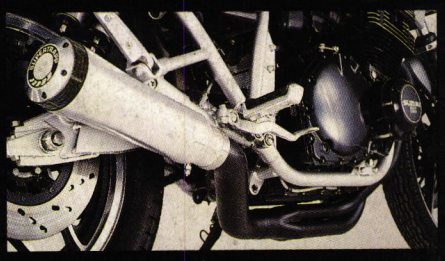

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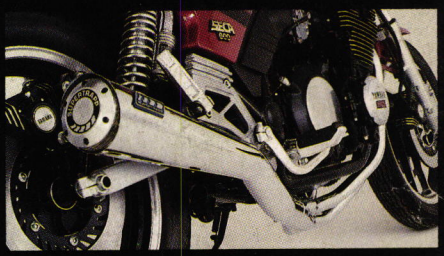

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